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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effect of parental involvement in the reading achievement of fourth grade students. Subjects, 12 students of above- and below-average reading levels from an inner-city school, were given a variety of surveys and letters to be taken home to their parents. Parents were encouraged to participate actively and were offered specific suggestions concerning ways in which they could help their children do better in school. Numerous informal interviews between parents and the teacher were also designed to enhance parent participation. Surveys given to parents at the end of the study indicated very high levels of interest and participation in the variety of programs and activities generated by the study such as storytelling, trips to the public and school libraries, pizza parties for book report writers, structured homework assignments involving both parent and child, and reading aloud to others. Results indicated that homework was better prepared and more often turned in on time when parental support was evident. Subjects' scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills improved by at least nine months over the course of the school-year-long study (considered by the school district to be excellent progress for an inner-city school). Results also indicated that the grades the subjects received in reading improved. (Five figures illustrating the data are included; 13 appendixes containing the survey instrument, sample letters to parents, worksheets, homework assignments, and activities are attached. Twenty references are also attached.) (RS)

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ENHANCING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT in FOURTH GRADE READING

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A Research Project

By

Kathleen R. Ladousa

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December, 1988

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CHAPTER ONE

The Proposal

Focus

According to the President of the National Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) the quality of education our children receive is heavily influenced by the extent to which parents take an active part in that education. This organization cites studies which show that better learning occurs when parents are involved in their children's education (The National P.T.A., 1986).

I believe that so much of what children experience before they even start school comes from the stimulation of their natural curiosity. If this stimulation has not happened we may find a student with lower intelligence, lower achievement, lower language ability, and even fewer social skills. Parental involvement, or the necessary role of parents in their child's learning and experience processes, should start at a very early age in order to provide the child with experiences to learn from and grow with, and this needs to continue all through the child's schooling.

In this research project, I intended to look at how increasing parental involvement, that is, drawing the parents in as active participants in their child's formal education, can enhance or heighten student

reading achievement levels. I included in my inquiry the study of relationships between increased parental involvement and the quality of the relationships between the parent and child, the teacher and child, and the parent and the teacher. I also wanted to explore the attitudes of the parents and students toward school and reading.

Rationale

Scholarly proponents of parental involvement in the schooling process have made some very strong arguments for increasing the role of the parent, one of which is that parents have a knowledge of and a relationship with their children on which school personnel can build. "Parents are the first and most important models and teachers of their children" according to Comer (1980, p. 126). I was not able to start interacting with the parents of the students in my class when they were little, but have had to catch up to them at the fourth grade with the reading skills they have at the present time.

Parents can lay the groundwork for children in reading by helping their child understand that reading is for pleasure and joy as well as for information and knowledge. If these ideas are steadfastly implanted they will continue to grow. Parents should serve as models for their children by reading with them and doing

some of their own reading in their child's presence. It's important for parents to read to their children and to have their children reciprocate. This also enables parents to give their children the individual attention they need.

I wanted to show the parents how they may help their children at home with three types of learning skills we covered in Unit 3 of their reading book: decoding and phonics, comprehension and vocabulary, and literature and language skills. Prefixes (a letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a word to form a new word) were the focus of the decoding and phonics skills. I hoped that the children would learn the meanings of several prefixes and how these prefixes affect the meanings of the words to which they are added.

There were three comprehension and vocabulary skills for Unit 3: summarizing a paragraph, predicting the outcome of a story, and identifying homographs (words that are spelled the same, but are pronounced differently and have different meanings). With these skills, I wanted to emphasize how we can help the children comprehend more effectively and efficiently.

The literature and language skills on which we worked included making inferences about a character's motives or feelings; identifying the plot, setting, and

mood of a story; and distinguishing between realism and fantasy. I hoped that the children would develop the skills needed to enable them to write a short story and read it or tell it to the class. Mastering these skills would help the child's understanding of written material in many different ways. With exposure to working on these skills at home, I hoped that the parents would be more sympathetic toward any problems their child might encounter with the learning processes, more likely to talk to and with their child about school, and better able to help their child with school work, particularly reading.

Methods of Research

Before implementing plans to increase parental involvement, it was necessary for me to gauge the current feelings about the level of involvement of parents, to assess the amount of parental involvement which parents and school personnel felt existed, and to determine what was felt to be a desirable level of involvement. This information was gathered by distributing questionnaires to and conducting informal interviews with the children and their parents in my class, and the teachers in my school. The questionnaires and informal interviews with parents started at the first parent-teacher report card conference of the 1987-88 school year and continued

until the end of the research project. Starting this early in the school year, I hoped to gradually prepare the parents for their part in the research project. Parents were more likely to participate and share and make contributions if they were adequately informed and prepared for participation before being invited to share in the teaching and learning processes used with their children.

I sent parent letters home with every reading unit to keep parents informed about what we would be doing in each unit of the reading book. Parent-child games and activities were provided with each unit (e.g., parent listens to child read; parent listens to book report; parent helps child to write a book report; parent and child read together and discuss readings for comprehension; parent and child make up games or puzzles relating to reading unit). Data from this aspect of the study focused on activities related specifically to Unit 3 work (discussed previously). Completion of these experiences were recorded and these data used to see if such activities correlated with the child's attitude toward reading.

Regularly encouraged library visits were another important experience for the children. Such visits, I hoped, would enhance their reading abilities and foster more enthusiasm toward reading. Emphasis during these

visits was put on helping children select books related to hobbies, sports, pets, and any other topics that would excite or interest them. Parents were invited to accompany students on weekly trips to our school library or to take their children to neighborhood libraries to help in the selection of books and to motivate more reading for pleasure and knowledge. A record was kept of the numbers and types of books each child selected and read, as well as the number of trips to the library with a parent.

Stressed throughout this project was the parents' interaction with their child s reading; the giving of the gifts of their time and attention, as well as their encouragement and help. Also stressed was the belief that enhanced interaction would benefit the child as evidenced through higher achievement scores, better attitudes toward reading, and hopefully, improved relationships between parents, students and teachers.

I recorded, in a journal, my observations of the feelings and attitudes of the children toward reading before, during and after this research project was completed. The number of hours parents and children spent together interacting in some form of reading activity was also recorded, as was the number of trips to the library. The achievement scores came from records kept in my grade book, the reading scores on the

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (I.T.B.S.), and the pre- and posttests for each reading unit that accompanies our reading series.

The broad array of reading I completed for the literature review in Chapter Two provided me with some very interesting background reading, as well as guiding me in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this research project. My review of the literature is a selection of the key works that I studied closely. They included: books and articles presenting theories concerning my research topic, research studies of projects similar to mine, and handbooks on ways of involving parents in their children's education and schools.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Focusing on Parental Involvement

My review of the literature on parental involvement led me in many different directions at first. Much information is to be found on the subject of "parents as participants in decision making." Parents and others in the community working as members of the school team can participate in activities such as: helping to set and evaluate school goals; developing school policies on appropriate parent/child-related concerns (e.g., homework, discipline, suspension, or retention); organizing budget priorities; developing and revising curriculum; selecting textbooks; revising report cards; and updating and improving the evaluation process for teachers and administrators. Other ways to involve parents include Parent Teacher Associations (P.T.A.), the school board, and school district committees, to name a few. This, however, was not what my research was to focus on, although it was very engrossing reading.

Parental involvement has been broken down into many types and categories by different researchers. Some of these are: school-home communication, parent awareness of school operations, parent influence, parent participation in school functions and activities, parent

participation in school decision making, parent leadership, and teacher-parent relations. In my search of existing literature, I was more concerned with research and articles that dealt with school-home communications, making parents more aware of what their child is studying, the influence parents have on their child's attitudes toward school and learning, parent participation in school functions and activities, and "at-home" parental involvement. These are all areas where I felt parental involvement would make a big difference in enhancing the academic achievement of fourth graders in reading.

Many of the journals and articles I read stated that parents are the first and probably the most important teachers their children will ever have (see, for example, Comer, 1980; Gips & Burdin, 1983; Henderson, 1981). As the National P.T.A. states, "children's contact with teachers amounts to about 8 percent of their time," leaving parents with access to their children for much of the remaining 92 percent (The National P.T.A., 1986, p.2). This leads one to believe that we should think more seriously about what parents can do at home to help their children succeed at school. My interests, then, led me to review the existing literature as it relates to the parents' involvement in their child's education, both in the home and school

settings, and its relationships to the child's academic achievement.

Enhanced parental involvement appears to be associated with better achievement in students from low-income families. Programs fostering parental involvement in at-home teaching improves achievement, particularly for children from low-income families (Rankin, 1967). Parental involvement in their children's education includes activities both within and outside of the school. In school, their roles vary from that of the traditional providing of juice and cookies and helping out on field trips, to acting as tutors or aides in the classroom. Outside the school parental roles vary from signing report cards, attending parent-teacher conferences, and reading notes from the teachers, to helping with homework and initiating other educational activities.

Definite relationships exist between the different aspects of parental involvement. Parents need to feel welcome in their child's school and most parents want to feel needed in helping in some way in their child's education (Larrick, 1963). In many of the research studies I read, (see, for example, Gips & Burdin, 1983; Henderson, 1981; Larrick, 1963), I found that the <u>type</u> of parental involvement did not appear to make as much difference as the <u>extent</u> of parental involvement.

"Involvement bridges home and school, creating unified efforts to motivate and instruct the young" (Gips & Burdin, 1983, p.3). Parental involvement capitalizes on the imagination and energy which can be released as a variety of persons help to identify and solve problems. Sharing the responsibility of children's education creates better human relations and more interactions between parent, teacher and child. It motivates all concerned to work to solve problems (Gips & Burdin, 1983). Given all of the above, it would seem that the more parents become involved in their child's school work and activities, the more benefit to the child and his/her education.

Changing Notions of Family

It needs to be recognized that families have changed dramatically over the past 25 years; more women are working outside the home and more children are being raised by a single parent, usually a divorced or never-married mother. The traditional parental involvement activities---plays, open houses, sports, school parties---are not bringing as many parents into the school as they once did. This could be due to a lack of time and child care and inflexible work schedules, among other factors (The National P.T.A., 1986). Regardless of the reasons for this lack of

parental involvement, it's time to see if teachers can get parents to become more involved and to see whether this can lead to increased academic achievement, especially in reading.

Among the most important influences on the effectiveness of teaching is the over-all atmosphere of the home. Above all, children need the genuine concern, guidance, discipline, and affection of their parents. The standards parents set and the attitudes they express have a decisive influence on a child's progress and motivation toward learning. Parental cooperation is, therefore, of great importance if the teacher is to be effective and the child is to learn (Larrick, 1963).

Goodson and Hess (1975) attribute the success of their programs for disadvantaged children and the children's gains in achievement to an increase in parents' awareness of their own influence over the child's education, a more systematic focus on parent/child interaction, an increase in verbal interaction, and an increase in parent responsiveness to the child.

In an annotated bibliography of research reports on "parent participation-student achievement," Anne Henderson (1981) concludes that "the evidence is growing": Parental involvement in almost any form improves student achievement. Henderson notes that

researchers have looked at the different roles parents play in children's education, which ones are most effective in developing cognitive growth, and what the connection is between involvement and achievement. From all of the studies Henderson cites, the argument for parental involvement is stronger than ever. When parents show a strong interest in their children's schooling, they promote development of attitudes that are the key to achievement, attitudes that are more a product of how the parents and children interact. When schools treat parents as unimportant or discourage parents from taking an interest in their children's education, they promote the development of attitudes in parents, and consequently in their children, that can suppress achievement (Henderson, 1981).

Utilizing Parental Involvement

Miriam Stearns (1973) developed an excellent diagram to show how parental involvement fits into the motivational process that impels a child to learn (see Figure 1). Stearns suggests that a connection exists between parental involvement and academic achievement, and that involving parents as tutors and trainers of their own children can have positive effects on children's I.Q. scores. She also states that when parents learn to teach their own children, they not only

give their children new skills, but also build up their own feelings of competence. This, in turn, motivates the children to perform better, setting a cycle of success reinforcement in motion (Stearns, 1973, p.24). (See Figure 1, p.15).

When Instructor magazine asked its subscribers to identify the single thing that would raise student achievement, the most popular answer was "more parental involvement" ("What do...," 1986). This tells us that teachers see the need for more active participation from parents. Children who are high achievers are much more likely to have active, interested and involved parents than children who are low achievers. The types of behavior found to influence achievement were providing experiences for children (e.g., playing games, attending church, talking), showing interest in the children's school activities (e.g., requiring children to make high marks, talking about school activities, helping with difficult homework), developing the children's interest in reading, and taking the initiative in contacting school personnel (e.g., conferring with the teacher and/or principal) (Rankin, 1967).

Joyce Epstein (1984) found that students whose teachers were leaders in the use of parental involvement made greater gains in reading achievement than did other students. As part of her on-going study of the effects

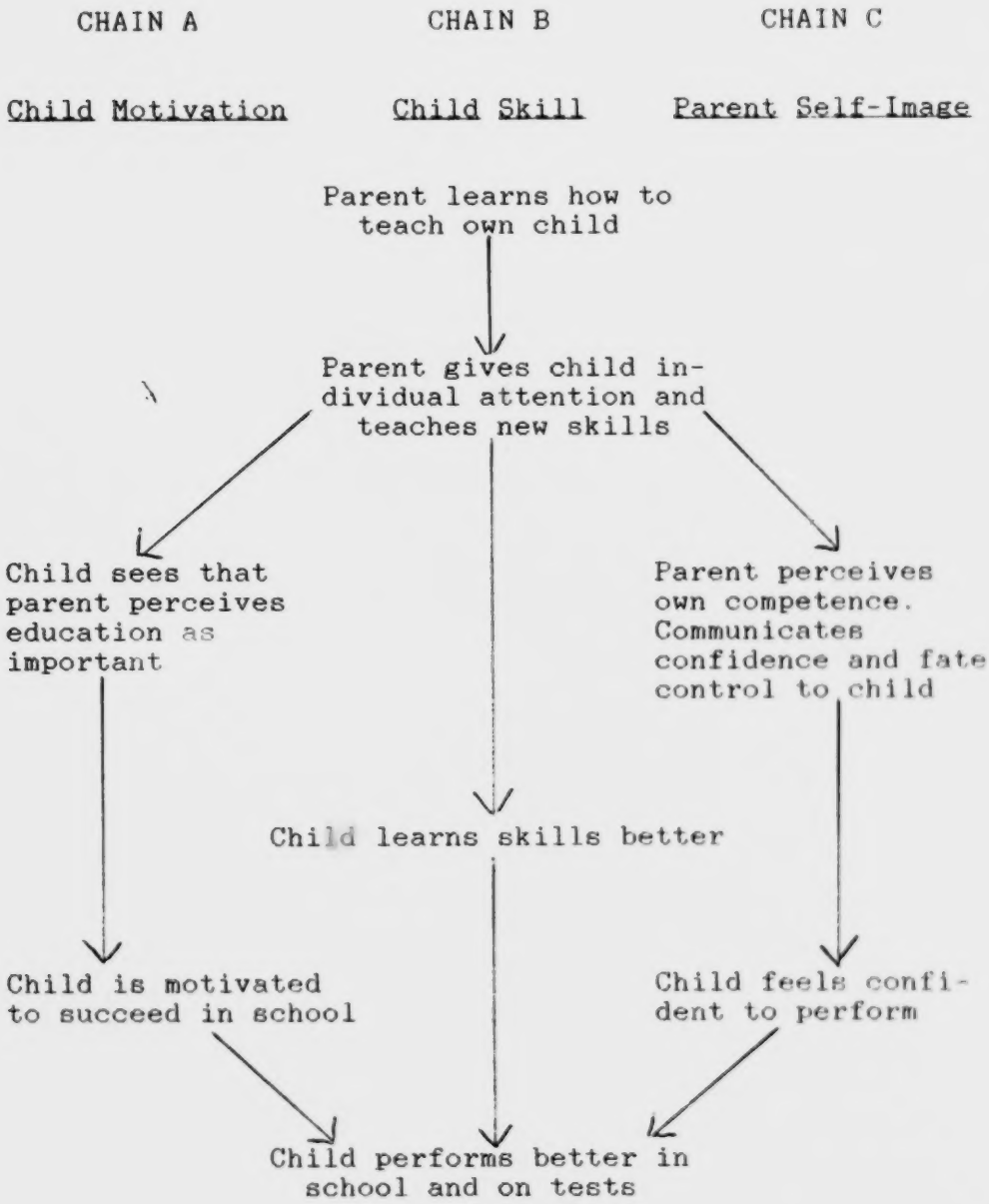

CHAIN A
CHAIN B
CHAIN C
Child Motivation
Child Skill
Parent Self-Image
Parent learns how to teach own child
Parent gives child individual attention and teaches new skills
Child sees that parent perceives education as important
Parent perceives own competence. Communicates confidence and fate control to child
Child learns skills better
Child is motivated to succeed in school
Child feels confident to perform
Child performs better in school and on tests

Figure 1: Parental involvement and the child's motivational process. (Stearns, 1973, p.24).

of teacher practices on parental involvement, and linking data from other studies, Epstein could determine whether students made greater gains in reading if their teachers emphasized parental involvement techniques. The positive effect of teacher quality showed that "good" teachers---significantly more than "poor" teachers---influence greater gains in reading achievement scores. That is, teachers who used a lot of parental involvement in reading had students with noticeably higher gains in reading achievement scores than teachers who did not make use of parental involvement.

Other studies and commentaries suggest that parents direct contact with their children in learning activities at home has important consequences for student achievement and other outcomes such as school attendance, classroom behavior, and parent-teacher relations (see, for example, Gillum, 1977; Rich, VanDien & Mattox, 1979; Comer, 1980).

The most important goal of our schools should be to provide support for the parents' educational role in the home, and then more interactions between home and school will benefit the child academically and help to develop success-related behavior traits. Gallagher, et al. (1976) found that some parent-initiated activities including reading books at home, using the library,

guided use of television, and extra-curricular lessons were particularly related to achievement, as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores. It can be recognized then, that parental involvement does enhance academic achievement when used regularly and in the correct ways.

Again, many of the journals and articles I read encouraged teachers to set up a homework hand-out for parents to help demonstrate that learning is a shared responsibility, belonging to both the school and the family (see, for example, National P.T.A., 1986; Epstein, 1983; Myers, 1985).

The National P.T.A. (1986), lists simple homework rules for parents to follow: (1) set a regular time and place for homework to be done; (2) if the homework includes directions, read them or ask your child to read them to you; (3) check to see if your child is following directions; (4) when your child is finished, check the work and circle the errors that need to be corrected; and (5) sign the child's homework. Teachers should encourage all parents to sign their child's homework as a means of fostering a better home-school relationship. Parents should write notes to the teachers from time to time indicating what they've noted about their child's progress with the homework. These seem like quite simple rules for families to try to

follow, but for many reasons beyond the teachers' control, they are not followed. Parents are often too busy or don't understand the subject matter. They may even feel inadequate when it comes to school work. Parents are not always around to enforce good study habits and rules.

Joyce Epstein (1983) lists seven purposes of homework: among them, participation, practice, and parent-child relations stand out. "Sometimes homework is the only form of serious communication about school and learning between parents and school-aged children. Homework provides a reason for parents to exchange information, facts and attitudes about school with their children" (Epstein, 1983, p.6). This may be a very correct notion; after all, homework can provide some much needed interaction between parent and child.

There are many benefits to be found in the right kind of homework. It should be the outgrowth of a classroom lesson. At home the child may have more time and quiet in which to think about what has been discussed at school and to express him/herself creatively. If homework is tailored to their needs, it may be useful for further practice. Through homework, parents learn of the child's activities at school. Home is also the place for extended reading pleasure and it is highly recommended that homework be

assigned for the sense of enrichment (Larrick, 1963).

Directing Parental Involvement with the Reading Process

There are two types of parents, according to Epstein (1984), who influence positive growth in reading achievement---parents who are expected to help their children (those with more education) and parents who are helped to help their children (those whose children's teachers involve them in learning activities and increase their knowledge about the school programs). In the lower elementary grades, teachers report that reading activities are their most frequent and satisfying parental involvement practices (Becker & Epstein, 1982). Parents report that they have the most experience with and receive the most requests from their children for assistance in reading activities at home (Epstein, 1983). It appears that this emphasis on reading--the most used parental involvement practice--has real consequences for change in students' reading achievement and attitudes toward reading.

Parents with more education and parents who report that they have learned more this year than previously about their children's instructional program, positively influence change in the reading achievement of their children. Knowing more about the school program is one of the clear effects on parents of teacher practices in

enhancing parental involvement (Epstein, 1983; 1984).

I feel teaching reading is not a job for the teacher alone. He/she needs the parents' help in developing interest in books. Reading skills increase with reading pleasure. How much a child enjoys reading can depend on the parents' attitude toward reading and the teachers' and parents' guidance. You can always tell a child who has been read to at home--he/she comes to school eager to have stories read aloud and to read for him/herself. Every time parents read aloud to their child, every time they pay a visit to the library and read books of their own, they are influencing their child's reading habits. According to Larrick (1963), children like to follow example.

Children learn to read by reading. Third and fourth graders may develop insatiable appetites for reading and consume a library book a day. They show an eagerness to reason things out and verify information. At this age, the teacher is showing the child how to tackle new words in print. The child is learning to use the dictionary and the encyclopedia and to find books in the library (Larrick, 1963). The best thing parents can do is to make attractive books readily available for their children by buying them, exchanging them with other families, or borrowing them from the library.

Summary

Taken together, what is most interesting about the research is that it all points in the same direction. The form of parental involvement does not seem to be critical, so long as it is reasonably well-planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting. Henderson (1981) adds that even programs that just involve parents as reinforcers of what is being taught at school are effective.

What becomes very clear from reading the research is that families provide the most important learning environment of all. If parents are not encompassed in the learning process, schools---and school children---are being deprived of an essential source of support. If there is no continuity between home and school, it becomes difficult for a student to integrate the separate experiences. In summary, researchers agree that it is parents who provide the most important learning environment. It they are not involved in the learning process, schools and students alike are being deprived of an essential source of support.

For my research project, my intentions were to draw the parents in as willing, active participants in the education of their children. In the following chapter, I will present the ways in which I attempted to enhance parental involvement with the parents of my fourth grade

reading class and the results of these endeavors.

CHAPTER THREE

Presentation of Findings

Background Information

This research project took place during the 1987-88 school year at an inner-city elementary school. Bain School is an elementary school (K-6 grades), located in what, today, is called the center of Kenosha, Wisconsin. The original school, according to a veteran teacher at Bain, was built in 1907 and named after Edward Bain, an early settler in Kenosha and a distinguished wagon manufacturer and the former owner of the land now occupied by the school.

The ten room school was so crowded by 1912, that the cloakrooms had to be used for classrooms. An addition was added to the three story building and was ready for use in 1914. In 1954 the third floor was condemned and the gymnasium was added on. Newspaper clippings from this period indicate that, in the late fifties, due to more overcrowding, portable buildings were set up on the playground where additional classes were held. The playground area was then moved across the street to where the Italian-American Club parking lot is now located.

Today Bain School has twenty overcrowded classrooms and a gymnasium housed under one roof and the playground is the blacktopped area surrounding the school building.

There are over 520 students enrolled at Bain at this time. The red brick building is located on 52nd Street, once known as Grand Avenue, flanked on the east side by 22nd Avenue (Howland Avenue) and on the west side by 23rd Avenue (Brockett Avenue).

Bain is a well-kept building that adds much to a neighborhood that has slowly deteriorated. The community surrounding Bain has been on the decline since the late 1960's. It was then that the population began shifting from a working class neighborhood, with a large ethnic population of Italians, to a neighborhood of White, Black and Hispanic families whose income is at or below the poverty level. Many of the neighborhood's once spacious, older homes that were occupied by one family have been divided into smaller apartment units, housing many people under one roof. The low level of family income entitles better than 81% of the children at Bain to a daily free lunch. Many of the other children may purchase lunch at reduced rates.

The closing of a major auto manufacturing plant, just a few blocks to the west of Bain, will probably cause more unemployment and problems for the area. Many of those in the neighborhood who are employed work at this plant or in businesses that in some way serve the plant. This plant closing may also contribute to more decline of the neighborhood because the area attracts

unemployed, lower socio-economic families with its abundance of low-rental housing units.

Many of the children at Bain are from these lower socio-economic families and most are from single parent families. The parents evidently don't have the confidence, the skills or the time to be involved in their children's education. These factors, then, can help us to try to explain some of the reasons why parental involvement is lacking in the education of the children at Bain School.

Writer's Responsibilities

At the time of this study, I was in my second year as a fourth grade teacher at Bain Elementary School. Inherent in my role of teacher were the many duties designated to all teachers of public school children: implementation of required curriculum, fundamental classroom management, and responsiveness to individual and group differences in the learning environment known as school. I also felt there was a great need to enhance parental involvement in my students' education, especially in this inner-city school.

As stated in Chapters One and Two, parents are vitally important in the education of their children, but sometimes they have to be helped to see this. Most of the parents at Bain were reluctant participants in

the formal education of their children. That is, teachers generally found it difficult to persuade these parents to come into their classrooms and principals have had similar difficulty in getting these parents to volunteer for activities at school. In most cases, parents did not help with homework or even sign school papers.

I did not start out with answers, but I did operate on certain assumptions: I assumed that the children and their families are interested in education; that children are able to learn; and that educators -- teachers and administrative staff -- do basically care. I wanted to look at the whole system rather than singling out problems with individual children in my reading class. I dealt with the interaction among the parents, the child, and the teacher.

Bain Elementary has long had implicit avenues of involvement (easy and comfortable access to teachers and administrators) and explicit means of participation (a parent/teacher group called The Bain School Association), but parents have been unresponsive to these modes of involvement. At times these families were described by Bain educators as most likely to be apathetic, even hostile to education for their children.

Does the involvement of low-income parents or parents of educationally disadvantaged youngsters help

to achieve the goals held by the education policy makers and planners--goals including better home/school relations, increased academic achievement, and more effective programs for underachieving students? Through my belief in the ability of these parents to contribute in important ways to the education of their children and my willingness to make an effort to involve these parents, I set out to prove this statement to be true.

The Project - Goals

Substantial research (refer to Chapter Two) in the past twenty years has shown that when parents are involved in their children's education, the children do better in school and the schools improve. (Note: None of the studies showed that involving parents in their children's education caused test scores to drop!) Indeed, programs incorporating strong parental involvement produced students who perform better than identical programs that did not involve parents as much, or that did not involve them at all.

In this research project I wanted to link parents' involvement directly to the learning of their own children. A most important reward for the parent is the success of his/her own child in school. My goal was not to take on the whole school at one time, but I did feel that if one group of parents could have a successful

home involvement experience supported by the school, more parents would be encouraged to share in a similar successful experience. I wanted to provide ways for families to work on academic skills (like reading) at home. My objectives were:

1. Parents will become more involved with their child's reading schoolwork at home.
2. Parents will become more involved in in-school activities.
3. Parents will gain a better understanding of the importance of working with their children at home, especially with reading.

Because most schools still do not give special attention to effective communications with parents, another of my goals, then, was to move from just telling parents that their involvement is important to showing them that their involvement is permitted and encouraged and then guiding them in specific and appropriate ways to assist in their children's development and learning.

Many of the parents whose children are enrolled in inner-city schools have difficulty working and communicating with the school in order to further the best interests of their children. Thus, these same parents feel inadequate in helping their children with work at home once the children reach school age.

In order for the school to successfully involve the

parent, it first must assure the parent that involvement is truly a legitimate activity and a prime function of the parent. The school must also deem reaching the family as important a function as reaching the child. Students at Bain do not always come to school from homes in which the value of education is highly recognized. For many inner-city children caught in a world of poverty and racism, the values of education are neither apparent nor inculcated. These students have had little to emulate and have little experience with success. I needed to work on ways to give both parent and child success and I chose our reading program to show students and parents, in an immediate and personal manner, that they could have success with reading and enjoy it, too. I plan to discuss in the next section the main points in the implementation of my research project on enhancing parental involvement with my fourth grade reading class.

The Project - Implementation

The people involved in my research project on enhancing parental involvement were my fourth grade reading class and their parents. Many of the families that live around Bain are made up of a rather mobile population. Therefore, the number of students in my room varied from week to week. Throughout the school year I had as many as thirty (30) students and as few as

twenty (20). Of these students, twelve (12) had been in Bain for third grade and were with me the entire school year for fourth grade. It is these twelve students and their parents that my research data will deal with directly. However, everyone in the class was exposed to my attempts at enhancing parental involvement throughout the school year.

My reading class was grouped heterogeneously; that is, students with any reading ability from high to low were placed in the same reading class, at the same level.

Questionnaires. It was necessary, in order for me to get started on trying to enhance parental involvement, to determine how parents and teachers felt about parental involvement. I sent home a short, preliminary questionnaire for the parents; I asked the staff at school to fill it out also. This was the first of many, many things I sent home last year. Whether the communique was a questionnaire or survey, a letter to the parents, or an activity to be done at home, parents were asked to return them to me in three (3) days via the child. For those parents who did not return it, the child was given a second communique with a letter to remind the parents to complete the instrument and return it to school. In the beginning, I offered a piece of candy or other simple reward to the child for reminding

the parent and remembering to return it. After a couple of weeks, I found offering an incentive no longer necessary.

In the first questionnaire I sent out (see Appendix A), the response rate from parents was excellent. It did take some reminders, but all were finally received. Some of the parents even took the time to write comments alongside some of the questions. The response received from the teaching staff was about 75 percent.

All parents and teachers felt there should be regular school activities that would involve students, parents, and teachers. Many parents (40%) responding to the questionnaire indicated they were never involved at school; a large percentage (75%) of parents stated that they did not receive basic, traditional communications from school to home, such as notes, conversations, phone calls or conferences with teachers.

While parents and teachers agreed that children should be helped at home with homework and encouraged to read, opinions were split 50-50 on whether teachers could actually influence parents to help their children at home; whether most parents are actually able to help their children with reading and math problems (Question #10); whether it is fair to ask parents to spend time in the evenings to help their children with school-related activities; and whether parents want to know more about

the school curriculum than they are usually told (Question #14).

From the comments the staff made on their questionnaires and from brief statements they made to me when I spoke with them, the teaching staff believed that parental involvement was important and a good idea in general, but many teachers said they had run into difficult problems when they tried to implement parental involvement practices.

In notes some of the parents wrote on their questionnaires, they expressed concerns about coming to school during the daytime when they worked or had little ones to care for at home. They also weren't sure if they were welcome in all classrooms. While the teaching staff generally agreed with all of my statements, the parents showed some reservations on numbers six through nine (Appendix A). Parents wrote that they didn t like to read, or they didn't have time to help with homework. Only one parent made what I considered a negative statement: "I don't go to school unless there's a problem!"

Half of the teachers who returned their questionnaires had reservations about the parents from Bain School having a say in developing school policies (Question #14), because they were afraid the parents' input would not be useful. Also, in the section for

comments, forty percent of the parents mentioned that feedback from the teacher on homework is extremely valuable because the parents need to be told if the help they are giving their child is correct.

I was a little dismayed at the teachers' apathy toward involving parents. But after a few of the veteran teachers from Bain told me about some very bad experiences they had when involving parents in activities, I could understand their points of view. In general, I felt good about the parents' answers. The answers led me to believe that parents wanted to be more involved in their childrens' education and the learning processes.

I also felt I needed to have some questions answered about the homework policies in the home (if there were any). I made up a "Parent Questionnaire on Homework Policy" (see Appendix B), and sent it home at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the school year. It was very rewarding to be able to record the changes at the end of the year. Asked whether they helped their children with homework, the parents originally answered: 50% never; 40% once in a while; and 10% everyday. By the end of the year, they answered: 10% never; 60% once in a while; and 30% everyday.

In the beginning, few parents had set aside a place

or time for doing homework and by the end of the school year, 50% of the parents reported that they had a special place and a set time for their children to do their school work.

Trips to the library, either the school library or the public library, increased by 70%. Parents spent more time reading to their children and having their children read to them as the year went by. Parents also learned more about helping their children acquire better reading skills.

This questionnaire, when given at the end of the year, certainly helped me to see some of what had been accomplished during this school year.

Letters. Periodically, I sent home letters to the parents explaining that I wanted to build a good teacher-parent relationship (see Example -1, Appendix C). A good teacher-parent relationship is also an indicator of students' success in school. Much research has shown that when children perceive their teachers and parents to be concerned about their cognitive development and working together to improve their academic achievement, the childrens' chances of doing well and finishing the school cycle increase greatly.

As a teacher who has spent many years in a self-contained classroom, I felt I knew the kinds of training and growth experiences needed to make the transition to

a team-work situation. Teacher and parent need team planning and human relations skills to be effective in their educational roles.

Teachers and parents can become a team when they relate to each other in terms of the human development processes in which they are involved. Teachers and parents need to be in touch with each other constantly to provide their children and themselves with a meaningful basis for development and learning. Teachers and parents, then, have a common interest in the total development of the child. I wanted to enhance ways in which we could work together and share the tasks to be accomplished, in order for these children to do a better job in reading and learning the skills involved in reading. In these letters to the parents I tried to list some of the responsibilities I wished to share with the parents and teachers. Throughout the year, I kept sending home letters (see Example -2, Appendix C) telling parents how much their involvement was needed and giving suggestions as to what types of involvement they could give.

The letters I sent home were generally well accepted. The letters were always to be acknowledged, even if the parents just signed their names to say they received them. Many of the parents, at times 60%, would write short comments back to me telling me that they

would try certain skills, or they would spend more time with their child on the skills I had mentioned.

Interviews. Informal interviews were conducted throughout the school year. My first opportunity to talk with parents about parental involvement was at the annual school open house the third week in September. Much to my dismay, only three parents showed up that evening. I did use this time to talk to these parents about reading and encouraging their child's endeavors in reading.

Other opportunities for short, informal interviews occurred when parent-teacher conferences were held at the end of the first and third grading periods in mid November and early April. (The school year in our district is divided into four quarterly grading periods.) On these report card distribution days students were dismissed at 11:00 A.M. so that teachers could meet with parents during three consecutive afternoons. Conferences were scheduled with the parents of each student at twenty-minute intervals throughout the afternoon and into the early evening.

During these conferences, I reviewed each student's academic accomplishments and flaws. I also gave parents specific suggestions on how to help their children do better in areas where needed. I feel there are at least four identifiable purposes of a parent-teacher

conference. The first is to deliver information that parents need to know about their child. The second is to receive information from parents that will help us teach the child more effectively. The third is to establish a plan with parents for reducing or eliminating an attitude or behavior which may stand in the way of the child's academic or social growth. The fourth purpose is to build a foundation of trust among all parties--parents, teachers, students, and the administration. Usually about 50% of the parents show up for conferences at the first grading period.

I saw this as an ideal time to ask questions as well. Some of the questions were: 1) What would you like your child to be able to do by the end of the school year? 2) What subjects do you feel are most important for your child to learn? 3) What experiences would you like your child to have this year? 4) How would you like to be involved in school? 5) Would you be willing to volunteer in school or the classroom?

Some of the answers I received were that the parents wanted their children to learn to read well, learn new words, learn math facts, and learn to spell. Recorded among my journal entries is the fact that 50% of the parents added phrases like "better than I can!" to these statements about what they wanted their children to learn in school this year.

Among the answers to question #3 (above) were that the parents wanted "good" learning experiences for their children, but they really couldn't tell me what they thought "good" learning experiences would be. They also wanted their children to learn to speak better and to become more familiar with books.

As far as getting involved at school (questions #4 & #5 above), the parents weren't sure if they should or if they could. Some of them cited work, not having enough time, and the need for a babysitter as reasons. A few parents said they "would think about it."

> One mother: If the children see Mom coming in to school and they see it is important to the parents, if they think it is important for them to learn, it is important for me to learn. School was never important to me, so it was never important to my older two [kids]. I changed and I got involved and now my younger two are doing good in school and they like it and school is important to all of us.

This was a very poignant statement from a mother who had never felt a desire to come around school until now.

Whenever I had the chance I asked questions and encouraged parents to volunteer around school. By the

end of the third quarter, Bain had three parents volunteering their time in the classroom, one in the office, and one in the school library. These were practices that were little heard of at our school. Parents just would not come to school and volunteer their time and assistance. Also at the third quarter parent-teacher conferences in early April, all but one parent showed up to discuss their child's progress and collect the report card. This was an excellent showing for our school and really made me feel as if the parents were recognizing the importance of coming to school for conferences.

Surveys. At the beginning and end of the school year I used a survey to find out if some of the students' attitudes had changed toward school, and toward having their parents more involved in their school work and their reading work in particular. The "Class Survey for Beginning of Year" was short and specific, as was the "Class Survey for End of Year" (see Appendices D & E). I did, however, add four statements to the survey for the end of the year. These additional statements were about whether or not the students liked having their parents invited to school and sharing in their activities. Also, I asked whether or not they liked our walking trip to the public library and our storytelling time each week. Ninety-four percent of the

students had enjoyed these activities. On the days when these activities were scheduled excitement ran high; it usually took extra time to settle the students down to do ordinary classroom work. This, however, was a small price to pay for their enthusiasm.

Half of the students actually said they liked to do reading homework and wished they had a longer reading class! (Questions #5 & #7, Appendix E). At the beginning of the year 60% of the students were not proud of their reading work and felt they could not do a good job in reading (Questions #1 & #2, Appendix D). By the end of the year, only one student still felt unsuccessful in reading and found reading boring (Question #6, Appendix E). I was very pleased with the results of these surveys. I could clearly see a more positive attitude toward reading and school had come about in my class.

I had given a "Parent Survey for the Beginning of the Year" and a "Parent Survey for the End of the Year" (see Appendices F & G). The parents' answers were also very positive. Likewise, with these surveys, I had added some questions to the one for the end of the year. I felt these added questions would help to explain the changes that were evolving with the parents of the students in my reading class.

Fifty percent more parents saw their child enjoying

reading class and reading for pleasure by the end of the year. Sixty percent of the parents said they didn't mind helping their child with homework or activities and their child didn't seem to mind doing them (see Appendix G, Questions #1, #2 & #3).

All of the parents felt that home and school efforts to help their child in reading had been better coordinated this year. Eighty percent of the parents had participated in the walking trip to the public library, the videotaping of a storytelling session, and the pizza party for the "Good Readers Club" and said they enjoyed all of these activities.

The results of the parents' surveys were most gratifying. One parent even added, in the comment section, that she had learned to read better because of sharing a reading session with her child each evening. Another stated, "I enjoyed very much the work with my child, and found just how much I still need to learn and how much it has changed from my school days. I hope to grow with my child and learn even more next year." Three other parents said they were reading more now that they were making frequent trips to the library. Five parents thought their children really enjoyed the activities, especially the storytelling, and that they had enjoyed it also. Comments attesting to the fact that they were less fearful of coming to school and

participating in classroom activities were made by two parents. One mother stated, "I don't mind coming to school when I don't have to hear 'Johnny is a bad boy' all the time." As for myself, I can report a more positive teaching experience this year because I asked parents for their assistance.

During the course of the school year I felt a survey on what my students thought about reading and watching television might give me some insight into their attitudes about reading. Using questions from a national survey in the Weekly Reader and making up some questions of my own, I gave the class a survey on "Reading and TV" habits (see Appendix H).

Some of the answers were to be expected: 80% of the students did not like to read the newspaper, but then again, of that percentage 65% do not receive a daily newspaper at home. Students' favorite pastime was watching TV, and only 10% claimed reading as what they do most often in their free time. The kinds of books that they liked to read were evenly mixed, with the exception of novels about teens (only three students liked to read novels about teens).

When the students read the newspaper, the part they read most was the comics. Cartoons, game shows, and adventure shows lead the list of favorite TV programs. Music was, by far, the most listened to type of radio

program.

I liked the idea that 50% of these children, at ten years old, still liked to have adults read to them. I was dismayed to discover that 50% of my class watched three or more hours of TV every day. Only one student had a limit imposed on his TV watching of one hour a day, after all homework was done!

The "Reading and TV Survey" told me many things about my students' reading and television watching habits and I feel that by the end of the year their hours of watching TV had decreased and their hours of reading for pleasure had increased. This was certainly evidenced by the increase in the number of book reports they were doing at home and also by the fewer number of TV shows they reported having watched.

Experiences. Library time became one of the most highly anticipated half hours of the week. The children truly enjoyed going to the library to learn library skills, to hear a story by the librarian, and to check out books and magazines. The librarian had to increase the number of books she would let my class take out, because of their voracious appetites for reading.

We also had a field trip where we walked eleven blocks to the public library. Parents were invited to join us and we had fifteen parents come along. Some of the children and parents had never been in a public

library. Everyone who didn't have a library card applied for one. The librarian gave us a tour of the facilities and everyone was very impressed. She also told a grand story and introduced them to many new, intriguing books. They were surprised to learn about the computers available for use, and the toys and games that could be checked out. From this day on, we kept a record of the number of trips to the public library, and with all this enthusiasm, we were not surprised when the number mounted.

As the reading spirit increased, book reports were introduced. We had better than 600 books read and reported on last year. Of course, there was an incentive: a pizza party for all of those who participated, and their parents. We had seventeen parents show up for our party one noon. The parents were very impressed with the amount of reading their children had done.

"SQUIRT," or Super Quiet Uninterrupted Reading Time, was introduced to all of the children in our school last year. The last fifteen minutes of every day were to be for uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading time. To carry out this activity I gathered together a classroom library tailored to my students' recreational reading interests. At first it was hard for them to be quiet and read for fifteen solid minutes, but as the

year progressed they did quite well. In this manner, the entire school reaffirmed each day the value of reading.

Another of our "experiences" was storytelling. This was introduced and led by the school librarian. At first we had some reluctant participants but again as the year progressed more of the children, and finally all of the children, participated. Every week parents were invited to join us for these storytelling sessions and we usually had three or four parents participate. Each student was encouraged to tell a story about a book they had read or a story they had heard or even made up. Some of the students were fearful of telling a whole story so they started with riddles. The librarian and I felt they were doing such a good job that we decided to videotape an hour-long session in which everyone told a story or recited a poem. It was a wonderful experience for all and I have lasting memories on video of an enthusiastic class and their involved parents. The parents said they enjoyed hearing the stories being practiced at home.

Homework. I tried to vary the homework and activities in reading as much as possible. We had "Homework Task Sheets" (see Appendix I), worksheets (see Appendix J), games (see Appendix K), and activities (see Appendix L) that parent and child could do together. At

first, I sent home these worksheets, puzzles, games, and activities for them to work on, but as the school year marched by, I encouraged them to make up games and activities of their own. For instance, the student would take home the week's reading vocabulary words and parent and child would work on a puzzle or a game that would be a way of learning and reinforcing the words or the learning skills involved (see Appendix M).

In the surveys I gave to both the parents and the children, they stated that they enjoyed doing homework sheets and activities together. These homework sheets and activities helped the parents help the child with reading on an almost daily basis throughout the school year.

How good and how important was the parental involvement the children in my reading class received? In my final chapter, I will discuss the results and findings of the tests and observations reported in this chapter, and I will try to provide some recommendations for educators and researchers.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Project - Results and Conclusion

Results

The purpose of this research study was to enhance parental involvement with my fourth grade reading class. There were three objectives that I stated in Chapter Three: 1) Parents will become more involved with their child's reading schoolwork at home; 2) Parents will become more involved in in-school activities; and 3) Parents will gain a better understanding of the importance of working with their child at home in reading. At the same time, I wanted to see if the academic achievement in reading for these students could be raised by enhancing parental involvement.

Communication. Some forms of communication and contact between the parents and teacher are nearly universal. From my teaching experiences, I know that virtually all teachers will report that they talk with children's parents, send notices home, and interact with parents on open-school nights. Many teachers ask parents to check and sign student's homework. These standard parent-teacher communications have become accepted ways of bridging the information gap and the sense of distance felt by teachers and parents who may be strangers to one another but who share common interests in the same children.

The more communiques that I sent home, the more interested the parents became. I took care of the question of whether the parent was receiving the communiques or not by requesting parents' signatures and giving rewards to the children when they were returned. The student was also told that I would be talking with the parent about all of these things whenever the opportunity presented itself.

As parent, teacher, and child got to know each other, our communications became honest, open, constructive, and productive. We learned to communicate well with each other. As we shared experiences, we enriched communications with all of our senses and insights. Children were coming to school and relating stories their parents had told them, "when I was little," etc. and knowledge that the parents were now sharing with their children. The lines of communication seemed easier now.

Attitudes. Through the responses to the questionnaires, letters, surveys, and interviews I discovered that most parents were very willing to assist at home with reading work and welcomed ideas. (I did stress working for short periods of time and only when both parent and child are not becoming upset. This was because some parents had told me they wanted to help, but they lost their patience.)

I found many parents who, given prodding, guidance, and a great deal of specific directions on what to do, would try consistently to help their child. I viewed all parents as "capable" of assisting their children in reading at home and worked out procedures and communication patterns that would enable parents with little schooling to assist.

Since involvement in school activities was voluntary, it may be assumed that parents must have perceived some benefit as their numbers grew and they continued to be involved. Parents who became more involved in their child's education and school activities also reported feelings of increased self-confidence and more control over their own lives. The mother who volunteered her time in the school office went in search of a paid job and now is doing general office work in a small accounting firm. Another one is shelving books, three hours a day, at the public library we visited. We also had a grandparent who decided to spend the afternoon in our classroom listening to students read on a one-to-one basis rather than being down the street in a tavern.

Parental involvement in classroom activities increased dramatically as the year went by. Parents seemed very willing to come into the school to observe or help with activities. Some parents said they had

been waiting for the invitation. By the end of the school year when the students presented their storytelling session, that we videotaped, the classroom had "standing room only" left for all the parents attending.

Bain School Association. When asked how to involve parents more, most local schools identify the parent-teacher organization. The Bain School Association had just about stopped functioning. After calls and letters to the parents and having parents visit other parents, the association began gaining members. This was a campaign started by one of the parents from my group.

At first we offered raffles and free incentives (solicited from neighborhood businesses) for coming to the meetings and gradually we stopped doing this and the parents seemed hooked. They have wonderfully informative meetings where they discuss the difficult problems of low achievement, attendance, and how to help their children. At one meeting they discussed what to ask at parent-teacher conferences. A new bond is developing between parents and school staff in the mutual effort of helping children to succeed. Staff are learning that parents with limited education and resources will demand greater school success. Parents are learning organizational skills and volunteerism is

growing. Parents feel welcome in our school and are treated as an important part of it.

Homework. Charted throughout the school year were various data that I thought may prove to be interesting and/or valuable. I kept records of how often the parents helped their children with reading homework, the frequency with which either parent listened to their children read, which parents read to their children, and of course, whether or not these things were successfully completed.

There were definite changes in the homework patterns of the children as the parents of the children became involved in working with their children at home. By bringing the parent into the school and by bringing the school into the home in a cooperative effort, some very positive results were affected. Homework was better prepared and more was completed on time. My findings suggest that optimal programs for parents result from the teacher's frequent involvement of parents in learning activities at home.

The number and types of book reports were also charted (these being posted on a large bulletin board for all to observe the fast growing numbers). By May, the students were each averaging three book reports a week.

Parents commented on the need for more parent

homework activities, information, and even "how-to" or "make and take" type workshops. They expressed a need and a desire to continue parental involvement in countless ways. All parents responding (98%) to the end of the year survey (see Appendix G) reported working with their children 20-30 minutes every day as compared to the 26% who said they were working with their children at the start of the school year. It was also interesting that the parents who were able to regularly spend time in the classroom were also the ones able to make a greater effort to help their children at home. I felt that my objectives had been accomplished when parents answered so positively on the final survey. They seemed to be in agreement that they had learned much and would like to learn more about working with their children at home.

Tests. While I was most concerned with the items mentioned thus far -- I could not resist comparing the results of the Unit Tests that accompany our reading series, the results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills administered to all students in the spring of each year, and the average of the students' reading grades.

The Unit Tests that accompany our reading series measured decoding and phonics skills, comprehension and vocabulary skills, and literature and language skills. As shown in Figure 2, (p.53) the scores increased

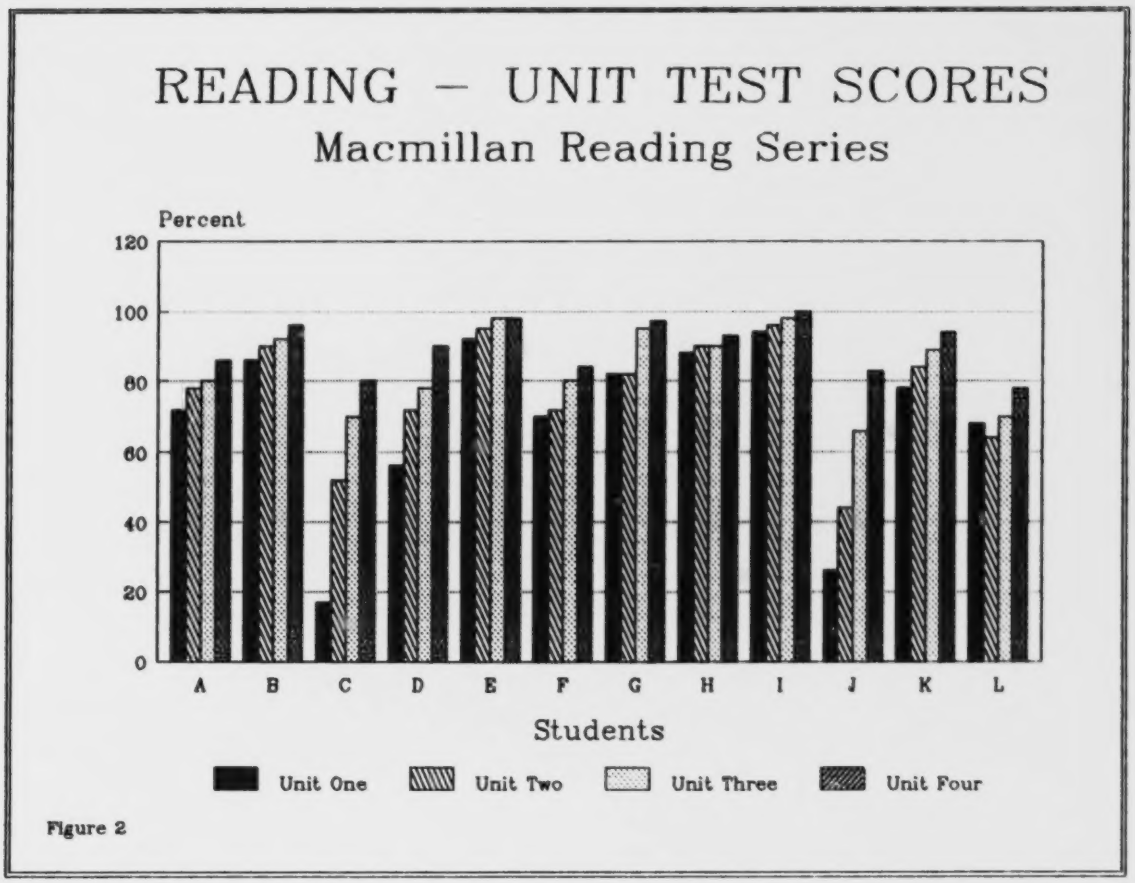

READING – UNIT TEST SCORES
Macmillan Reading Series
Percent
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
Students
Unit One
Unit Two
Unit Three
Unit Four

Figure 2

impressively for Unit Three when I was most actively encouraging parental involvement.

For this research study, scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were used as one of the standard measures of academic achievement administered to all students every year. Standard scale scores in reading were the basis for analysis for the student. Our district considers nine months growth on the test to be excellent development in an inner-city school. As shown in Figure 3, (p.55) some of my students far exceeded this growth in reading (see students H, I, K, L), while all showed increased growth from the previous years' scores.

Figure 4, (p. 56) shows the students' total test scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for 1987 and 1988. Student C was the only one showing no progress on the total test scores, although student C had exhibited nine months growth in reading. Student I produced the largest growth and it could be dramatically seen in everything he did once his mother had started intensive parental involvement. This mother also learned to read better along with her son. Another student who faired well was student H; she and her twin brother, in the other fourth grade class, read to each other every evening.

Our school district evaluates all of its students quarterly, via the report card, as part of the grading

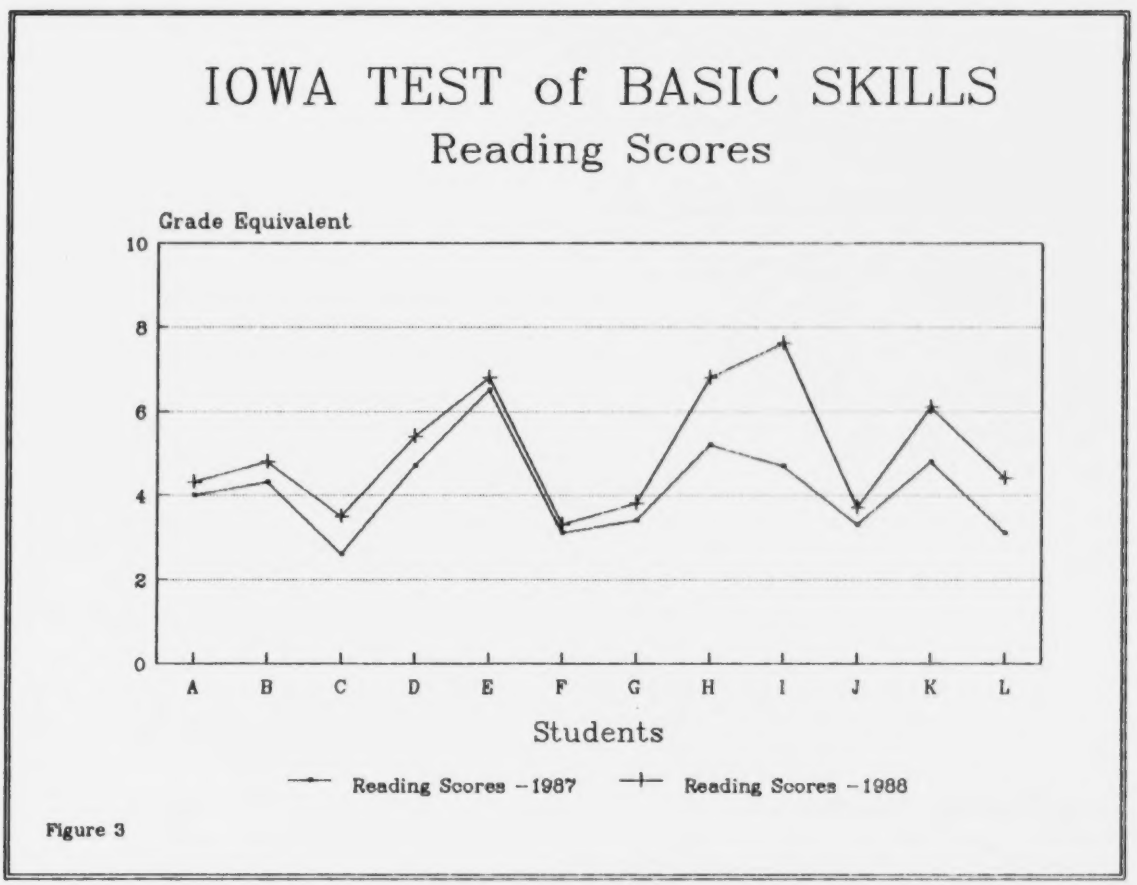

IOWA TEST of BASIC SKILLS
Reading Scores
Grade Equivalent
10
8
6
4
2
0
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
Students
Reading Scores - 1987
Reading Scores - 1988

Figure 3

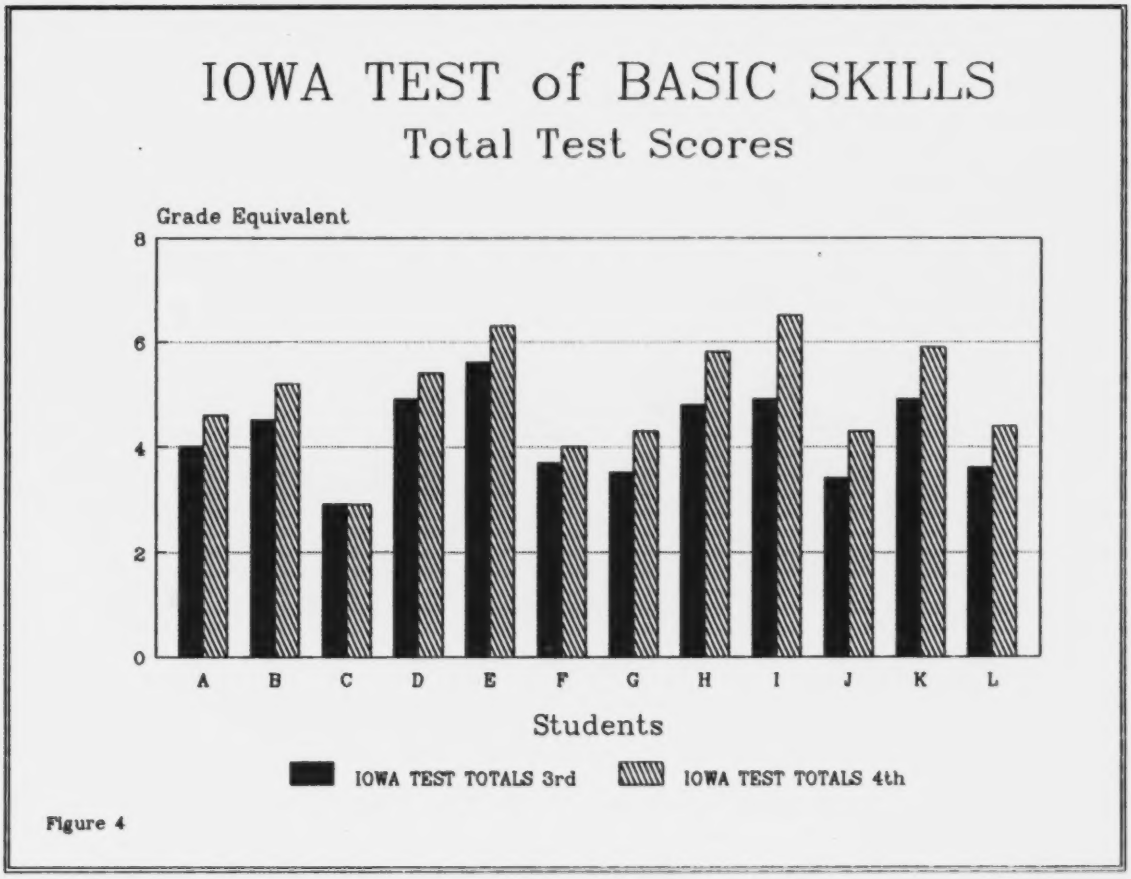

IOWA TEST of BASIC SKILLS
Total Test Scores
Grade Equivalent
8
6
4
2
0
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
Students
IOWA TEST TOTALS 3rd
IOWA TEST TOTALS 4th

Figure 4

basis during the school year. The letter grade standards of A, B, C, D, and F, based on a 4.0 scale are used for evaluation of student progress. In Figure 5, (p.58) I have displayed the distribution of the average of the grades each student received in reading in 1987 and in 1988. Some of the students made very noticeable gains (e.g., students C, F, G, I, J, K, L) while others did not do as well. All students did improve their reading grades, and I believe that it was because of increased parental involvement.

Sometimes students who are initially low improve more because there is room for their test scores to change and, I assume, because they, their teachers and their families are working to improve learning and learning skills.

Conclusion

A child has the best chance to learn and achieve optimally when he/she experiences adequate rearing, is enmeshed in a supportive home and social network that facilitates development, when the school enhances such development, and when the message is one of belonging, worth, and value. Parent presence in responsible and respected roles in the school sends a message to the child -- the school, the school people, and the program are important. There was a wonderful ripple effect on

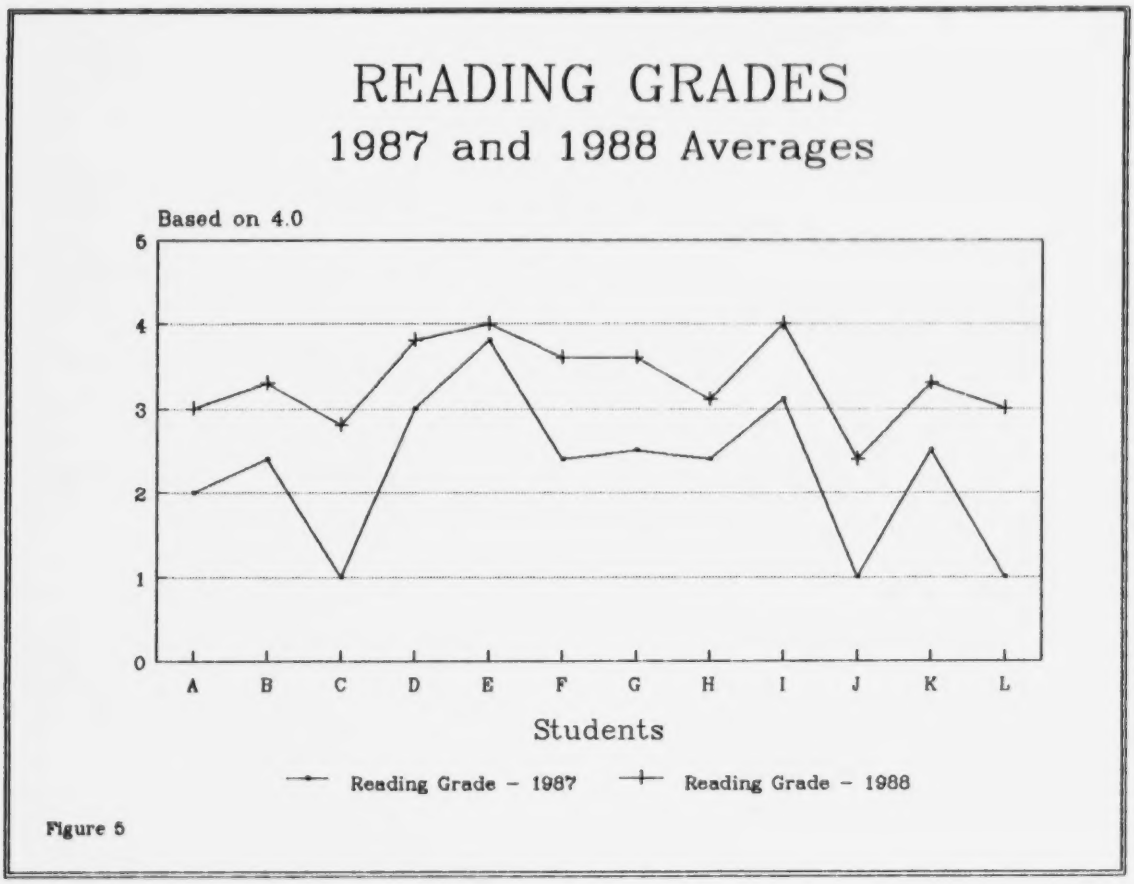

READING GRADES
1987 and 1988 Averages
Based on 4.0
5
4
3
2
1
0
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
Students
Reading Grade - 1987
Reading Grade - 1988

Figure 5

other parents when it came to becoming involved and letting others know about it and involvement on the part of the parents grew.

The ring of respect encircling students, teachers, and parents is an essential relationship for effective learning. A break anywhere in the circle results in a breakdown in student performance. If there's close communication, cooperation, and sincere caring, however, there seems to be no limit to what might happen -- students learn more, teachers are more fulfilled, and parents feel better about their children and themselves.

It seems clear, from my data, that parental involvement has a significant impact on student academic achievement. Parents are their children's first and most influential teacher. What parents do to help their children learn is extremely important. Moreover, what school districts do to train parents to be better, more influential teachers at home is equally important.

Parents can enhance their sense of dignity and worth as they work intelligently to be guides in the intellectual, moral, and citizenship development of their children. Parents gain their children's respect and cooperation as children experience the competence and contributions of their parents to their learning and experiences.

The evidence that parental involvement increases

achievement? The effect may be indirect... Without family support, it's very difficult for a low-income child to make it. It is important to have supportive parents. I'm sure as programs of parental involvement increase in number, we will begin to find a more extensive and convincing body of research to support the argument that parents do help improve educational programs and the cognitive development of their children (at all socio-economic levels).

As I paid attention to my students' social skills, I could see that many low-income children are less a part of the mainstream social system and therefore, do not acquire some of the social skills and the motivation for school learning that is needed for their academic success. In the middle-income areas, children see their parents using these skills, pick them up through imitation, and are motivated toward school learning. But in low-income areas we must demonstrate, in concrete terms, that academic and social skills are useful.

On the basis of the results of this research project, one method of parental involvement would be as effective as the others, as long as teacher presentation, credibility, and rapport are maintained. However, more than one method needs to be used at one time. A wider range of projects, activities, etc. is more useful to allow for the great variations in

parents' abilities. This project did show that there were persistent, significant effects on change in reading achievement and habits from fall to spring in a class where parental involvement practices were used intensively.

Some ideas for further research are indicated as a result of this project:

1) Differences in techniques which successfully motivate students and parents could be investigated.

2) Results obtained by using self-instructional materials could be compared with achievement obtained by using materials supplemented with class interaction.

Ideally, positive home and school experiences occur throughout childhood. Family involvement in schools may take the form of participating in parent-teacher associations, volunteer activities, engaging in active communication with teachers and other school personnel regarding the quality of children's education, and most important, being there for the child. Parental involvement encourages children to believe that school is important to their families and that their families belong in the school. It also results in teachers feeling support from parents for the school's goals and giving more attention to children.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

September, 1987

Dear Parents and Staff:

Currently there is a great deal of interest in parental involvement in the education of children. This questionnaire is designed to measure your opinions about parental practices in our school. Please remember that you are responding to these questions as you feel they should relate to parental involvement in our school.

I really appreciate the time and effort that you are devoting to this questionnaire. It means a lot to me personally, and I believe these data will provide the basis for a significant piece of educational research.

My sincere thanks,

Mrs. K. Ladousa

(Please see next 2 pages)

Parent Involvement in our school: What is; what should be... For the purposes of this questionnaire, I am responding as a: _____Parent _____Teacher
(Please check one)

Please indicate your response to each of the following statements by circling either "YES" or "NO"

YES	NO	1.	There should be regular school activities (such as reading enrichment programs, sports events and recognition ceremonies to honor student achievement) that involve students, parents, and teachers.
YES	NO	2.	Our school should encourage parents to work in the school as volunteers.
YES	NO	3.	Parents should supervise children with their homework.
YES	NO	4.	Visits to the school should be scheduled during the day so that parents may observe the kinds of experiences their child is having in school.
YES	NO	5.	There should be parent education classes run by the Bain School Association (B.S.A.) in cooperation with resource personnel (provided by the school) to teach parents how to help their children benefit from school.
YES	NO	6.	Parents should read to their children for 10 or 15 minutes every day or have their children read to them.
YES	NO	7.	Parents should accompany their children to the school or neighborhood libraries to encourage them to read.
YES	NO	8.	Parents should let their children see them reading to show that it is an enjoyable experience.
YES	NO	9.	Enhancing parental involvement in students' reading and reading activities will improve students' reading achievement.

(Continue on next page)

YES	NO	10.	Parents should help their children every evening with reading and math homework drills.
YES	NO	11.	Personal conferences with teachers should be initiated when the parents feel it is necessary (outside of regularly scheduled conferences).
YES	NO	12.	Parents should let their children know they believe a good education is important.
YES	NO	13.	Parents should help teachers and administrators develop written goals for increasing parental involvement.
YES	NO	14.	Input should be asked for from parents when written school policies are developed (such as attendance, homework, discipline, and grading requirements), also for selecting textbooks, learning materials, and serving on the team that revises report cards.

THANK YOU

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX B
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON HOMEWORK POLICY

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON HOMEWORK POLICY

Please circle the letter of the answers that apply:

1. Do you help your child with his/her homework?
   a. everyday
   b. once in a while
   c. never

2. Do you have a special place set aside in your home for doing school work?
   a. yes
   b. no

3. Do you have a special time set aside each day to do school work with your child?
   a. yes
   b. no

4. How much time do you spend each day doing homework with your child?
   a. 0-10 minutes
   b. 10-20 minutes
   c. 20-30 minutes

5. Do you have a library card?
   a. yes
   b. no

6. Does your child have a library card?
   a. yes
   b. no

7. How often do you go to the library?
   a. every week
   b. every two weeks
   c. once a month
   d. once in a while
   e. never

8. Do you read to your child?
   a. yes
   b. no

9. Does your child read to you?
   a. yes
   b. no

(Please continue on next page)

10. Do you and your child take turns reading to one another?
    a. yes
    b. no

11. Would you like to learn more about helping your child with his/her homework?
    a. yes
    b. no

12. Would you like to learn more about helping your child with: (Please circle all that apply)
    a. reading words
    b. sounding-out words
    c. spelling words
    d. writing words
    e. reading sentences and stories
    f. listening
    g. speaking
    h. understanding things
    i. writing a sentence
    j. writing a story

13. Would you like to have more information about the work skills taught in 4th grade?
    a. yes
    b. no

14. Would you be able to come to school to learn about the skills taught in the 4th grade?
    a. yes
    b. no

THANK YOU

APPENDIX C
(LETTERS - EXAMPLES)

(Example -1)

October, 1987

Dear Parents:

It is extremely important that we develop a good parent-teacher relationship. You are going to hear from me often during this school year and I hope that you will feel free to come to visit our class or talk to me anytime. I have a duty to work with you, the parents of the children I teach, as well as to teach your children.

We have the responsibility to educate children in the best possible way. Parents are the child's first teacher. When parents talk, sing songs, touch or feed the baby, you are conveying a message---"I love you... you are important". Various behaviors, such as providing the child with proper nutrition, rest, security, and affection are also instructive. You, the parents, teach the child about life and provide the child with a model of how things work. Parents enhance the natural proclivity of children to learn.

Parents and children who know and value each other have obviously learned from each other. Both, in turn, come to know and value teachers as capable people who also value them for who they are and what they can do.

Teachers need to work together with the child's parents. They need to instruct and educate the student and their parents. Teachers have to identify the student's needs and provide good educational strategies after they come to know the learning styles of their children.

I hope that you will work with me this year to provide the best learning experiences possible for your children. You will be hearing from me often during this school year. Please respond and help me to supply your child with a good educational experience.

Sincerely,

Mrs. K. Ladousa

(Example -2)

February, 1988

Dear Parents:

A gift is not always something tangible. It can be a gift of time spent with another person; it can be a gift of one's labor; or it can be the gift of friendship itself. Gifts of a variety of types are to be found in the pages of Unit 3 of Sketches, not the least of which is the gift of the pleasures to be found in the written word.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CLASSROOM?

We will be learning skills in three areas as we read Unit 3: Decoding and Phonics, Comprehension and Vocabulary, and Literature and Language Skills. Mastering these skills will help your child's understanding of written material in many different ways.

I will be sending home activities and ideas for you to work on at home with your child. Your child will benefit from working on these skills at home. The activities suggested in this letter will reinforce classroom instruction. Please choose those that you feel you and your child will enjoy.

THE GIFT OF CONVERSATION

Share the gift of conversation with your child by talking about the theme of this unit. Ask your child what was the most precious gift ever received. Encourage your child to think about gifts in a new way by telling about a nontangible gift you received that was special. Perhaps this was a hug from your child or a time when someone performed a chore for you to do something else.

BOOKS GIVE US GIFTS

Explain to your child that books can give us many gifts. A book can give you the gift of laughter, of learning, or of entertainment. Encourage your child to visit the school or local public library as often as possible. Accompany your child when you can. Look through some books together. Talk about topics of

interest. Encourage your child to take out books on a regular basis. From time to time, ask about the books your child has taken out. Showing that you are interested in reading will motivate your child to keep reading more.

PLOTTING IT OUT

Discuss the last book your child read. Ask when and where the story took place, and what the mood of the book was---funny, tense, mysterious, sad. Ask your child to summarize the beginning of the book in just a few sentences. Then have your child do the same with the end of the book. Have your child describe the main characters. Ask your child to summarize the plot by telling what happened to the characters.

Ask what the main character's problem was in the story and how the character solved the problem. Have your child skim the climactic point in the story to find words and phrases that describe how the character felt and what the character said.

Ask your child to explain the reasons for the character's actions and feelings. Ask such questions as these: "Why do you think_____said that? How do you think_____felt when that happened? What clues are there to _____'s feelings?"

Performing the suggested activities with your child---giving your child a gift of time and attention---will include you in the learning process as well as enrich your child's learning experiences.

Sincerely,

Mrs. K. Ladousa

(Example -3)

March, 1988

Dear Parents:

Over the course of the year, there will be many opportunities for you to help your child with specific learning tasks. There may be new words to help spell or find in the dictionary or math facts to help review and practice. Whatever the case, knowing that you can be counted on for support and guidance will make your child a more confident, enthusiastic and successful learner.

But you don't have to wait for a specific assignment in order to be helpful. In fact, studies show that the little things parents do day in and day out have the greatest impact on their children's success at school. These are things that don't necessarily deal with a particular skill or subject matter; instead, they set a general uplifting tone and create a positive attitude about school and learning.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Here are some ideas from a variety of studies that show how parents can build an environment at home that encourages learning and school success:

1. Make it clear that education has a high priority in your home. Whenever your child has a school paper or project he or she is proud of, display it in a prominent place. Show an interest in and bring your child's attention to reports about school found in the newspaper. Participate in parent and family activities at school whenever possible. In other words, let your child know that while you don't go off to class every day, you still are very much a part of the school family.
2. Show that you, too, are a learner. Take family walks or drives just to enjoy exploring new places and meeting new people. When you try something for the first time, say a new recipe or home repair project, let your child know that while you're unsure about the end result, you hope to learn from any mistakes you make and expect to do better the next time you try the task. And when you look at your child's work, remember that learning doesn't grow in leaps and bounds. It moves slowly, step-by-step. Show your appreciation for even

the slightest progress; it marks a true accomplishment. Praise your child's effort even if gains can't be seen; your reassurance will be incentive to keep on trying.
3. Look for moments---while watching TV, shopping, or perhaps, taking that family drive---to spark your child's thinking and imagination. You can try "I wonder" statements: "I wonder why the sponsor chose to use a football player in that commercial." "I wonder why they display these magazines at the checkout counter." "I wonder why there's a stop sign instead of a traffic light at this corner."
4. Instead of waiting until you're alone to enjoy a good book, be a model for your child by making reading an activity the family does together. And periodically, turn it into a special occasion by reading aloud to your child. Being read to is a treat and motivation for children at all ages.

Thank you for helping to build a positive attitude about school and learning for your children.

Sincerely,

Mrs. K. Ladousa

APPENDIX D
CLASS SURVEY for BEGINNING of YEAR

CLASS SURVEY for BEGINNING of YEAR

Please circle YES or NO for your answer at the beginning of each question. Feel free to write any comments you might want to add. THANK YOU

YES NO 1. I'm good at reading.

YES NO 2. I'm proud of my reading work.

YES NO 3. I'm smart in reading.

YES NO 4. I like to read.

YES NO 5. I like to do reading homework.

YES NO 6. Reading is boring.

YES NO 7. I wish I had a longer reading class.

YES NO 8. I like the Weekly Reader.

YES NO 9. I like my parent(s) helping me with my reading.

YES NO 10. I like reading at school.

YES NO 11. I like reading at home.

APPENDIX E
CLASS SURVEY for END of YEAR

CLASS SURVEY for END of YEAR

Please circle YES or NO for your answer at the beginning of each question. Feel free to write any comments you might want to add. THANK YOU

YES NO 1. I'm good at reading.

YES NO 2. I'm proud of my reading work.

YES NO 3. I'm smart in reading.

YES NO 4. I like to read.

YES NO 5. I like to do reading homework.

YES NO 6. Reading is boring.

YES NO 7. I wish I had a longer reading class.

YES NO 8. I like the Weekly Reader.

YES NO 9. I like my parent(s) helping me with my reading.

YES NO 10. I like reading at home.

YES NO 11. I like reading at school.

YES NO 12. I liked our walking trip to the public library.

YES NO 13. I liked our storytelling time each week.

YES NO 14. I liked having my parents invited into the classroom for all the activities we did this year.

YES NO 15. I think my parent(s) liked coming to school for these reading activities.

Please list all the things you liked and disliked about reading class this year. Also please tell me if there are any changes you would like for next year. Please tell me what these changes would be.

APPENDIX F
PARENT SURVEY for BEGINNING of the YEAR

PARENT SURVEY for the BEGINNING of the YEAR

Please circle YES or NO in answer to the following questions and return to school with your child by Friday. THANK YOU

YES NO 1. My child usually enjoys reading class.

YES NO 2. My child usually enjoys reading for pleasure.

YES NO 3. My child doesn't mind reading homework.

YES NO 4. My child learns more because of reading homework.

YES NO 5. I am usually able to help my child with his/her reading homework.

YES NO 6. I do not mind doing an activity with my child for reading class now and then.

YES NO 7. My child and I make trips to the public library.

YES NO 8. We have bought books, magazines, etc. for him/her to read this past year.

YES NO 9. I encourage my child to read.

YES NO 10. I like to make up games with my child.

YES NO 11. Reading is one of the most important things my child can do in school to prepare for future life.

Please feel free to write any comments you have about the reading program as it was last year here at Bain. Also any suggestions you may have for next year.

APPENDIX G
PARENT SURVEY for END of YEAR

PARENT SURVEY for the END of the YEAR

Please circle YES or NO in answer to the following questions and return this to school by Friday.

THANK YOU

YES NO 1. My child usually enjoyed reading class.

YES NO 2. My child usually enjoys reading for pleasure.

YES NO 3. My child didn't mind reading homework.

YES NO 4. My child improved because of reading homework.

YES NO 5. My child learned more because of reading homework.

YES NO 6. Watching my child do his/her reading homework made me more aware of my child's strengths and weaknesses in reading.

YES NO 7. I was usually able to help my child with his/her reading homework.

YES NO 8. One of the values of the reading homework was the time spent with my child.

YES NO 9. One of the values of the reading homework was to keep my child busy.

YES NO 10. I would like to see the reading activities and homework sheets continued.

YES NO 11. My child would like to see the reading activities and homework sheets continued.

YES NO 12. I did not mind doing an activity with my child for reading class now and then.

YES NO 13. Home and school efforts to help my child in reading were better coordinated this year.

YES NO 14. My child and I have made trips to the library this school year.

YES NO 15. We have bought books, magazines, etc. for him/her this past school year.

(Please continue on next page)

YES NO 16. My child enjoyed the storytelling times.

YES NO 17. I encourage my child to read.

YES NO 18. I like to make up games with my child.

YES NO 19. Reading is one of the most important things my child can do in school to prepare for future life.

Please feel free to write any comments you have about the reading program as it has been this year. Also any suggestions you may have for next year. THANK YOU

Personally, I feel that our reading class and activities (storytelling, trips to the libraries, book reports, pizza party, videotaping, homework and activity sheets, etc.) have made for a very rewarding experience in reading this school year. I would like to thank you, the parents, for all of your help, because without you none of this would have been successful. My goal this year, to raise everyone's reading test scores and the make the children more interested in reading, has been achieved for the most part.

Sincerely,

Mrs. K. Ladousa

APPENDIX H
READING AND TV SURVEY

READING AND TV SURVEY

1. Circle one: Boy Girl

How much do you like to do each of these things?
(Check one box for each)

	like a lot	like a little	do not like
2. read books			
3. read magazines			
4. read the newspaper			
5. watch TV			
6. listen to the radio			

7. When kids your age want to have fun, which might they do most often? (Circle ONE)
   a. read
   b. watch TV
   c. listen to the radio
   d. call someone on the telephone
   e. play

8. When kids your age are home, which might they do most often? (Circle ONE)
   a. read
   b. watch TV
   c. listen to the radio
   d. call someone on the telephone
   e. play

9. Which kinds of books do you like to read most? (Circle one or more than one)
   a. make-believe stories
   b. true-life adventures
   c. mysteries
   d. science/nature/wildlife
   e. novels about teens

(Please continue on next page)

10. Which kinds of magazines do you like to read most? (Circle one or more than one)
    a. news magazines
    b. movie/TV magazines
    c. comics
    d. fashion magazines
    e. kids' magazines
    f. music magazines

11. Which parts of the newspapers do you like to read most? (Circle one or more than one)
    a. news stories
    b. sports pages
    c. ads
    d. comics

12. Which kinds of TV programs do you like to watch most? (Circle one or more than one)
    a. adventure
    b. comedy
    c. news
    d. cartoons
    e. talk shows
    f. game shows
    g. sports

13. Which kinds of radio programs do you listen to most? (Circle one or more than one)
    a. music
    b. news/weather
    c. talk shows
    d. sports

How important is it for people to keep up with the news? (Check one box for each)

	very important	important	not important
14. adults			
15. kids your age			

Where do you think people get most of their news? (Check one box for each)

	newspaper	magazines	TV	radio
16. adults				
17. kids				

(Please continue on next page)

How much do you believe the following? (Check one box for each)

	believe a lot	believe a little	do not believe
18. news on TV & radio			
19. news in newspapers			
20. news in magazines			
21. information in books			

After reading a book, are kids your age more likely or less likely to do the things listed below? (Check one box for each)

	more likely	less likely
22. buy things		
23. try to learn more about a subject		
24. think about a future job		

After watching television shows, are kids your age more likely or less likely to do the things listed below? (Check one box for each)

	more likely	less likely
25. buy things		
26. try to learn more about a subject		
27. think about a future job		

How do kids your age usually feel after reading a book? (Check one box for each feeling)

	yes	no	maybe
28. confused			
29. smarter			
30. bored			
31. worried about the future			
32. eager to help solve problems			

How do kids your age usually feel after watching TV? (Check one box for each feeling)

	yes	no	maybe
33. confused			
34. smarter			
35. bored			
36. worried about the future			
37. eager to help solve problems			

How much do you agree with each of the following statements? (Check one box for each statement)

	agree a lot	agree some	do not agree
38. Kids my age do most of their reading in school.			
39. Kids would read more if they didn't have TV at home.			
40. Most kids my age like adults to read to them.			
41. Most news is too hard for kids my age to understand.			

42. Who do you watch TV with?_____

43. How often do you watch TV?_____

44. How many hours a day do you watch TV?_____

45. How many hours a day do you spend reading a book?_____

46. Do you feel it is important to be a good reader?_____

47. Do you go to the public library?_____

48. Does an adult take you to the library?_____

49. Do you have a public library card?_____

50. COMMENTS_____

THANK YOU

APPENDIX I
HOMEWORK TASK SHEETS

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Reading is fun!

Objective: To further the child's interest in reading for pleasure.

Materials required for the exercise: Any reading materials the child selects for himself/herself.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it):
After the child has selected the material he/she wishes to read, have the child read the first few pages to you (the parent). After the child has finished, the parent being read to will go back and reread what the child has read with the child listening to see if the parent reads correctly. (It is sometimes fun for the parent to make a mistake to see if the child is watching and listening carefully.)

If the parent makes a "mistake", allow the child to correct the mistake. Make a great joke of the matter.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Listening Exercises to Build Attention

Objective: To develop the child's ability to attend to material being read to him/her.

Materials required for the exercise: Reading material from the library or that recommended by the classroom teacher. This material should be at least two grade levels above the child's reading level.

The material should start with a one page selection and advance to a point where four to six pages are read to the child.

Procedures for the exercises (How-to-do-it):
Begin by reading a page selection to your child. At the end of the reading ask some questions about the selection in order that the child may show you he/she has listened to the material and can answer good questions related to the reading.

As time progresses, read longer story selections. This will build the child's attention span as well as help him/her learn about the world.

Note: This exercise is good for working with more than one child. It is also good when working with preschoolers.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Vocabulary Meaning Through Dictionary Work

Objective: To teach the child use of the dictionary.
To help the child gain meaning of words.

Materials required for the exercise: Word list from reader. Vocabulary cards. Dictionary (child's version if possible) and paper and pencil.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Go over the word list from the reader. Underline the words the child does not know. Make up word cards from the list of words the child does not know.

Look up the words on the cards in the dictionary. Read the meaning. Have the child use the difficult word in an oral or written sentence.

Review the word cards frequently.

Have the child explain the meaning of the word he/she has looked up on occasion.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Working on Reading Vocabulary Drill with two or more children (at home).

Objective: To give each child participating practice recognizing reading vocabulary by sight.

Materials required for the experience: Word cards, word lists from each child's teacher. Word cards and lists from whatever book the child is reading at home.

Note: If you have other children attending Bain they will be using the same reading series and you may want to keep the word cards that you make, so your children can use them every year.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Have each child say the words on the word cards. If the child misses any word on the word cards, have him/her write the word ten times.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Finish the Story...

Objective: To give the child training in listening to a story and understanding of the possible endings to the story.

Materials required for the exercise: Several simple stories either in written form or from memory.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Tell or read a story to the child that he/she is not completely familiar with.

Do not finish the story. Ask the child to finish the story as he/she thinks it will end.

After the child finishes the story, the original storyteller or reader should finish it from the text as it was intended to be finished.

Continue this exercise at another time with a different story.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Spelling/Reading Vocabulary Drill

Objectives: Practice in recognizing reading vocabulary through spelling.

Materials required for the exercise: Word cards, word lists, readers, library books and paper and pencil if the child can write well.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Have the child read the sight word from the word card. Next, have the child spell the word orally, if the child cannot write well. Or have the child write the word, spelling it as he/she writes it.

Next have the child read all the words he/she has learned.

Read from the book where the words have been taken.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Read Aloud to Your Child

Objective: To instill a desire for books and reading.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it): You read to children while they are still young enough to want to imitate what they are using and hearing.

You make sure the readings are interesting and exciting enough to hold the children's interest while you are building up their imagination.

You keep the first readings short enough to fit their attention span and gradually lengthen both the span and the readings.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Reading the Television Guide

Objective: Bringing the child to an understanding of a different kind of reading. (This is the kind of reading a child must do in order to read a TV Guide and is the same kind of reading one must do for reading charts of all kinds.)

Materials required for the exercise: A TV Guide from the store or the newspaper, paper and pencil.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Sit down with the child and plan an evening of television after the homework and supper periods are over.

Sit down and plan a weekend of television viewing together.

Ask the child what he/she might like to watch on TV on a given evening or weekend. Show the child how the TV Guide is divided into days of the week and times during the day and the evening.

Plan together the programs, writing down the program, the channel, and the time the program is on. Help the child write this information in chart form.

Go over the information together to see if you agree on the selections.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Reading for Understanding (Comprehension)

Objective: To help the child understand what he/she has read on a page or in a story.

Materials required for the exercise: Word and sentence cards from the page or story to be read. If this material is not available to you, you can make this from paper, using a pencil.

Procedures for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Make sure the child knows the words on the page or in the story before he/she reads the story to you. In this way he/she will be able to concentrate on the meaning of the story and not have to concentrate of sight words.

Have the child read a library or school book to you. Be sure to praise the child when he has done well.

Ask the child to tell you about the story that he has just read. Ask him/her what he thinks would happen if the characters or the plot would change.

Example: If the child has read the story of "The Three Bears", you might ask, "If you were Goldilocks, what would you have done?" "Was Goldilocks smart?" "Would you have gone into a strange house?"

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

Prefixes - a word part that is added to the beginning of a base word to change its meaning.

Prefixes - im-, in-, mis-, non-, un-,

in-, im-	= not; without	improper
un-	= not; the opposite of	untie
non-	= not; the opposite of; lack of	nonstop
mis-	= bad or wrong; badly; wrongly; lack of	mistreat

Objective: To learn the meanings of these different prefixes and how these prefixes affect the meanings of the words to which they are added.

Materials required for the exercise: paper and pencil.

Procedure for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Sit down with the child and read through this worksheet. Then do A. and B. (below) together.

A. Chose one of these words and add a prefix to it to make a word that will complete the sentence.

pure quoted stop hurt direct

1. Luckily, Jill was _____when she fell off her bike.
2. Instead of driving straight to Grandma's house, we took an _____ route.
3. The mayor complained that the newspapers _____ what de had said.
4. We were in a hurry to get to Miami, so we took a _____flight.
5. The water in that river is not good to drink because it is _____.

B. Make a list of words (as many as you can) that start with the prefixes listed above.

HOMEWORK TASK WORKSHEET

A Summary

Objective: To be able to pick out the most important information in the paragraph and leave out unimportant details.

Materials required for the exercise: pencil.

Procedure for the exercise (How-to-do-it): Read each paragraph below. Then underline the sentence that gives the best summary of the paragraph.

1. Sylvia got up early and rushed through breakfast. She raced around to straighten up the house so she could get ready to go out. She had to go to the dentist. Then she planned to shop for a birthday present for her friend Lydia. She also had to stop at the library to return some books. Then she was meeting John for lunch.

   a. Sylvia cleaned the house before she left for her dentist appointment.
   b. Sylvia wanted to buy her friend Lydia a birthday present.
   c. Sylvia got an early start because she had a very busy morning planned.
   d. Sylvia was meeting John for lunch.

2. When Sylvia got home, she sighed and yawned. She was tired and a bit annoyed. The bus hadn't come on time, so she was late for the dentist. The store was out of the record she wanted to give Lydia. When she left the store, she saw she didn't have time to go to the library before she met John for lunch.

   a. Sylvia was annoyed when she got home because she didn't accomplish everything she had planned.
   b. Sylvia was late for the dentist because the bus didn't come.
   c. Because she was behind schedule, Sylvia didn't go to the library.
   d. Sylvia enjoyed her lunch with John.

APPENDIX J
WORKSHEETS

BEFORE AND AFTER

A prefix is a syllable that is added to the beginning of another word to change the meaning of the word. Add the prefix mis-, dis-, un-, re-, or in- to the following words and write the new word.

take_____ done_____

agree_____ read_____

deed_____ agree_____

safe_____ wrap_____

use_____ copy_____

appoint_____ chain_____

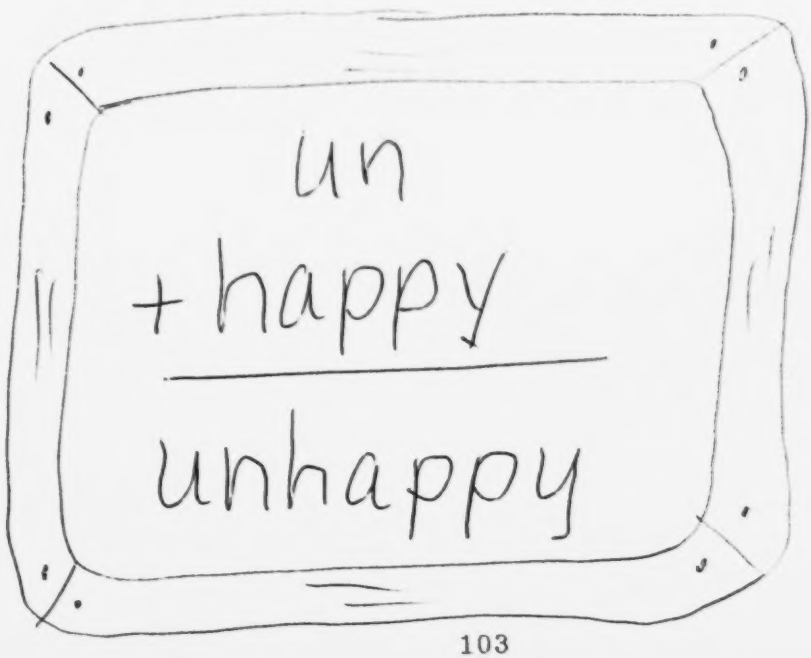
lay_____ open_____

load_____ understand_____

appear_____ zip_____

lead_____ seal_____

field_____ please_____



BEFORE AND AFTER

A suffix is a syllable that is added to the end of another word to change the meaning of the word. Add the suffix -ful, -er, -est, -ly, -less, -ing, -s, -es, or -ed to the following words and write the new word.

short_____ power_____

cheer_____ slow_____

play_____ dish_____

dog_____ help_____

sweet_____ rest_____

shout_____ animal_____

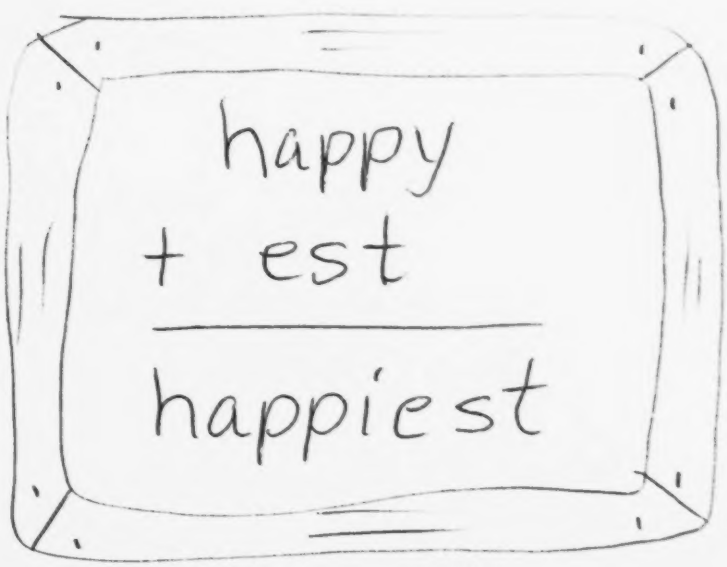
mean_____ move_____

new_____ harm_____

stay_____ snow_____

crawl_____ fast_____

thought_____ use_____



Name_____ Date_____

A prefix is a word part that is added to the beginning of a base word to form a new word. Below are some prefixes and their meanings.

im-, in- = not; without
non- = not; lack of; the opposite of
un- = not; the opposite of
mis- = bad or wrong; badly; wrongly; lack of

A. Read each numbered word. Then circle the letter next to the meaning of the word.

1. unharmed
a. harmed badly
b. not harmed
c. harmed again

2. impractical
a. not practical
b. too practical
c. without practice

3. misunderstand
a. able to understand
b. understand again
c. understand wrongly

4. nonviolent
a. full of violence
b. not violent
c. in a violent manner

5. inactivity
a. bad activity
b. full of activity
c. without activity

6. uncooked
a. opposite of cooked
b. cooked badly
c. cooked too long

B. Add a prefix from the box above to each word to make a new word that means the same as the phrase on the right. Write the new word on the line.

1. correct_____not correct

2. trust_____lack of trust

3. afraid_____not afraid

4. personal_____not personal

5. believer_____opposite of believe

6. judge_____judge wrongly

7. fasten_____opposite of fasten

When you write a summary of something you read, remember the following:

Include the most important ideas or events.
Leave out details that are not important.
Use your own words.

Read each paragraph. Then write a summary of the paragraph on the lines below.

1. When Mrs. Court suggested that Alan apply to the state university, he said he would rather go to a smaller college. Then Mrs. Court gave him some catalogues from small colleges to look at. He put some aside because they were too far from home. Others wouldn't do because they didn't have astronomy departments. Three of the schools, however, looked like they might be right for him.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Alan applied to all three of the colleges, but he really liked Hayes best. It had many interesting courses in astronomy and other subjects that he liked. It also had a championship baseball team. When he visited the school, everybody was very friendly. In May, Alan got a letter from Hayes that made him very happy. He had been accepted.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name_____ Date_____

As you read, you can often predict what will happen next or how characters will act. When you make a prediction, you should think about what the author says and what you know about your own experience.

Read each paragraph. Then decide what probably happened next. Circle the best answer.

1. Jorge went to the library on Saturday. While he was there he saw a poster advertising a contest. The poster said that the student who wrote the best essay about his or her favorite book would win a trip to Washington, D. C. Jorge was always talking about the books he liked. He thought he could write a good essay about his favorite, The Wind in the Willows. He had always wanted to see Washington. He read the poster carefully. It said you needed an official application form. The forms were available at schools and libraries.

   a. Jorge looked for some books to take out of the library.
   b. Jorge asked the librarian if he had an application for the contest.
   c. Jorge looked for The Wind in the Willows in the library.
   d. Jorge went to school and asked his teacher for an application.

2. Gina took her dog Skipper out to the backyard. She held up a dog treat and told Skipper to beg. When he did, she gave him the treat. Then she told Skipper to sit. He just stared at her. She pushed him into a sitting position, and he got right up again. "No treat until you do it right," Gina exclaimed as she pushed Skipper down again. Finally, after many tries, Gina said "sit" and Skipper sat down by himself.

   a. Gina brought Skipper back into the house.
   b. Gina told Skipper to beg.
   c. Skipper ran away.
   d. Gina gave Skipper a treat.

Name_____ Date_____

To predict outcomes, or make guesses about what is going to happen next, use the information the writer gives you and your own knowledge.

Read each paragraph. Then complete the last sentence in each paragraph by writing what will probably happen next.

1. Sarah has a stamp collection. When Sarah's mother gets letters at work from other countries, she always gives the envelopes to Sarah so she can save the stamps. Today, Sarah's mother got one letter from Greece, two from Holland, and one from Japan. She took the letters out of the envelopes. When Sarah's mother got home, she

_____

_____

2. As soon as Sarah got the envelopes, she examined the stamps. Then she asked her mother to put a kettle of water on the stove. When the water came to a boil, Sarah's mother put the kettle on the table. Sarah used it to steam the stamps off the envelopes. One by one, she held the envelopes over the kettle. When the glue softened, she gently slid off the stamp. When all the stamps were off, Sarah took out her stamp album. Then she_____

_____

_____

3. Sarah had been collecting stamps for a long time, and her stamp album was full. She didn't have enough money to buy a new album, so she started keeping her extra stamps between the pages of books. One day Sarah's mother opened one of her books and 6 stamps fell out. As she picked them up, she suddenly realized what she could get Sarah for her birthday. On the morning of her birthday, she gave Sarah a package that looked like a book. When Sarah opened it she found_____

_____

_____

Name_____ Date_____

HOMOGRAPHS are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings. Homographs also have different pronunciations.

The wind is perfect for flying a kite today.
I forgot to wind my watch this morning.

Read each pair of sentences. Choose the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence. Write the letter of the correct meaning on the line.

_____ 1. Sally asked her father to present her to the movie star.
_____ 2. Victor bought a present for his little sister.
a. a gift b. to introduce

_____ 3. The information desk was just inside the museum entrance.
_____ 4. The magician hoped to entrance the audience.
a. a place for entering
b. to fill with delight or wonder

_____ 5. Fred was chosen to conduct this meeting.
_____ 6. The baby's conduct was usually very good.
a. to lead
b. behavior

_____ 7. Tommy knew Rosa would refuse to lend him her favorite record.
_____ 8. The refuse is collected on Fridays and taken to the dump.
a. waste; rubbish b. to be unwilling

_____ 9. Reesa decided to grow beans for her science project.
_____10. The fans tried to project the winner of the game.
a. to predict b. task or activity

_____11. Jay heard that alligators live in the sewer.
_____12. Holly took her dress to Mrs. Kendall, who was a great sewer.
a. someone who sews
b. an underground pipe

Name_____ Date_____

Like people in real life, characters in stories have feelings and motives, or reasons for doing things. Use the following as clues to discover the feelings and motives of a character.

what the character does
what the character says
how a character does or says something

Read the story. Then answer the questions. Use complete sentences.

Loren and her father were going on a fishing trip in the morning. Loren went to bed good and early and set her alarm clock for 5 A.M.

When the alarm rang, Loren popped out of bed. She quickly got dressed and went downstairs. In the kitchen her father was already packing their lunches. "Ready?" he asked Loren. Loren nodded eagerly.

On the fishing boat, Loren and her father baited their hooks. Soon the boat moved out to the bay and they were able to start fishing. Loren cast her line and waited. Nothing happened. The morning was half over, and she hadn't had so much as a nibble. This wasn't fun at all. "Dad," said Loren. "What am I doing wrong?"

"You're doing fine," he said. "You just have to be patient."

A few minutes later, Loren felt a big pull on her line. "I got something, Dad! I think it's a big one." She reeled in the line slowly and steadily. It was a nice-sized flounder!

1. Why did Loren go to bed early the night before the fishing trip?

2. How did Loren feel about going on the fishing trip?

3. How did Loren feel when the morning was half over? Why?

4. How did Loren feel at the end of the story?

APPENDIX K
GAMES

GAME IDEAS

1. Ask your child to choose a favorite game to play with you, and have your child teach you how to play the game. This activity will help your child learn how to give directions, which is good preparation for following directions. At another time, reciprocate by teaching your child how to play a game that you enjoy.

2. "Word Bingo" is a game that can be used to review vocabulary words from time to time. But it's a game that is more fun with several players, so get everyone in the act---friends, family, neighbors. Make a game card for each player, using pieces of cardboard. Divide each board into 25 squares. Then select words from the current vocabulary list to write in each square. Be sure to make each board different. Make a word card for each of the words. Provide buttons or small pieces of cardboard as markers for each player. To play the game, read a word from one of the word cards and have the players cover the word on their cards with a marker. The first player to cover five words in a row---down or across---is the winner. The winner may then be the caller for the next game. Very the game as you wish. For example, you might make the object of the game be to cover the entire card, just the four corners, or only the bottom or top row.

3. "What's the Word?" is a fun way to review vocabulary words. Word games are a good way to remember new words because the more you use a word, the more firmly it will stick in your memory. Prepare word cards for the vocabulary words. The first player silently chooses a word without indicating which word it is, looks that word up in a dictionary, then reads the definition saying, "The meaning is..... What's the word?" The first player to answer correctly is next to give a definition.

(Please continue on next page)

4. Reviewing new vocabulary words from time to time will help to make them a permanent part of your child's reading vocabulary. "Guess the Word" is a game that you can use at home to review the new words your child has learned in school. Give a clue to the meaning of one of the words, and ask your child to guess the word by pointing to it on the word list or picking up a word card and then reading it aloud. (Use a dictionary to assist in providing clues if necessary.) Here are a few sample clues to get you started.

These are people who offer their services for free.
(volunteers)
This is a quick look.
(glimpse)
This word means the same as damp.
(moist)
This word is another word for contaminated.
(polluted)
This is a kind of trap.
(snare)

APPENDIX L
ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE ACTIVITY

Field Goals and Foul Lines

In the story "Thank You, Jackie Robinson," Sam said that Robinson "hit a double." He also used the expressions "tried to pick him off second base" and "worked two double plays."

Expressions such as double, pick off, and double play are special to the game of baseball. Words or expressions used by people in a particular sport, occupation, or profession called *jargon*. How much baseball jargon do you understand?

steal a base	to run toward the next base while the pitcher pitches and to get there before the baseman gets the ball from the catcher
home un (also four-bagger, roundtripper, circuit shot	running a circle of all the bases from home plate back to home plate without stopping
bullpen	place where pitchers warm up
bases are loaded	there are players on all bases

Some jargon is common to several sports. Can you explain what a *benchwarmer* is? What is the *line-up*? What sport is a person playing to get a *hole-in-one*? To *sink a basket*? Can you give two ot three examples of football jargon?

Can you list examples of Jargon used in any other sport?

*Parent Signature*_____

Sharing Reading Through Art Activities

1. Original book jackets, illustrations, or advertising posters can be made by children to illustrate a book read.
2. Illustrated maps, showing a character's travels or the area encompassed by a story.
3. Murals or montages make excellent group activities. Children can depict as many events from books as their imaginations and the available materials allow.
4. Mobiles may be constructed of major characters from a story.
5. Dioramas and shadow boxes offer opportunities to express creativity in interpreting a scene from a book.
6. Life-sized figures of favorite characters may be drawn on mural paper.
7. A movie or TV show can be made of a story by drawing and pasting together scenes from a book.
8. Bookmarks, illustrated by the children with "the part I liked best" or "my favorite character," make lasting mementos of enjoyable reading experiences.
9. Felt board characters provide an excellent vehicle for storytelling.
10. Dolls or clay figures may be dressed to represent favorite characters.

Sharing Reading Through Writing Activities

1. Book characters may exchange letters in the middle grades. Children may write to one another as the characters might.
2. New endings might be written by children for their favorite books, or original episodes written for particular story characters.
3. A diary or log may be written by children to represent the experiences of the main character of a book. While keeping a diary, the children pretend they really are the character.
4. Analogous stories or poems, written in the manner of old favorites, offer a challenge to middle graders.
5. Samples of particularly good writing selected by the individual children may be read to their classmates and discussed in terms of the qualities exhibited.
6. Writing headlines is a fascinating activity. A provocative headline such as "Twelve-year-old Makes a Million" might be posted on a bulletin board and children encouraged to guess what book is represented.
7. Booklets about favorite authors, complete with cover illustrations, might be "published" by the class.
8. Every school newspaper or magazine should include a good feature section devoted to children's books. This section might have a different theme for each issue.

Dramatizing and Discussing Activities

1. Pantomime is an interesting means of sharing an event or a characterization from a story that has proved especially popular with the class as a whole.
2. Puppets are as much fun to make as they are to operate.
3. Radio shows may be presented with a tin-can "microphone" or with a tape recorder.
4. Newspaper and magazine articles about children's books, authors, or illustrations stimulate an awareness of the importance of children's literature.
5. Comparisons are always interesting. Comparing fairy tales or ways of life observed in stories about different cultures.
6. Panel discussions of various kinds are possible even though no two members of the panel have read the same book.
7. Authors are important. Especially by the middle grades, children should begin to be aware of prominent authors. This awareness can lead to discussions of various authors and comparisons of their works.
8. "Homework" can be fun. Suggest that the children might enjoy reading a book to a younger child at home and reporting to the class his or her reactions to the book.
9. Quiz games, patterned after "Twenty Questions," offer an opportunity to become acquainted in depth with book characters.
10. Questions in envelope pockets on the bulletin board present a continuous challenge and stimulus for children to add to the envelopes or to read and find out more about a particular story.
11. A first-grade buddy system is an effective way to encourage those first faltering steps toward the selection of library books. Try pairing children and letting each pair find a nook where they can read to each other from books especially written for independent reading.
12. Acting as evaluators for books helps children become more interested in independent reading.
13. Children's magazines afford a wealth of varied material that can serve as a springboard for lively class discussions and motivate further reading.

APPENDIX M
Activities Created by Parents and Children

REAL or NOT REAL?
(Thought up by Student A and Step-Mother)

To help student distinguish between reality and fantasy, tell a tall tale about the events of your day. Tell your child, "What a day I had!" Explain that some of the things you tell will be real, and some will be fantasy. Have your child stop you whenever you tell something that could not really have happened. Ask your child to explain what was fantastic about the event you related.

- -

Our Changing Weather
(Created by Student H and Dad)

There are bound to be several changes in the weather over the period of a day. A day may start out sunny, turn cloudy, rain for a while, and turn sunny again. At the end of a day when the weather has changed significantly, discuss with your child the sequence of these changes. Begin by saying, for example, "First, it was sunny. What happened next?" Encourage your child to use words like <u>next</u>, <u>then</u>, and <u>after that</u> as the sequence of events in the day's weather is related.

Dictionary Hunt
(Created by Student F and Dad)

Write the vocabulary words on cards or slips of paper, or display the list where the players can see it. Each player takes turns choosing a word from the list. Then the players hunt for the word in the dictionary. The first player to find the word reads the word aloud and its definition. The second player has to use the word in a sentence. If a word has more than one meaning---another skill this activity practices---the players can take turns making up a sentence for each meaning of the word.

- -

Alphabetically Speaking
(Created by Student G and Mom and Dad)

Write the vocabulary words on individual slips of paper and practice alphabetizing them by the third and fourth letter in the word. Gather the cards together in groups of words that begin with the same letter. Help your child arrange the words in each group in alphabetical order. Possible groups:

assignment	constructing	ignored
auditorium	companion	invention
audience	composition	instructions
advice	conversation	
anxious	criticism	
admit		recommended
astonishment		recite

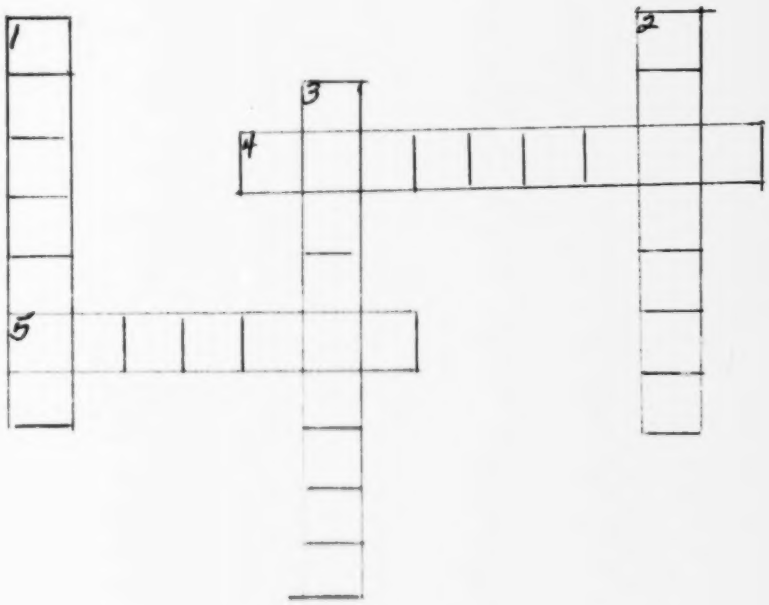
Crossword Puzzle
(Created by Student K and Mom)

Use words from below to complete the crossword puzzle.

symbols foreign express territory developed

DOWN
1. to say or show
2. from another country
3. worked out in detail

ACROSS
4. large area of land
5. things that stand for other things



Vocabulary Word Search
(Created by Student C and Mom)

Words to look for:

blushed	script	signature
selected	batch	relief
clench	console	sway
thrust	method	assistant

B A T C H D E T C E L E S
L M E R T F C S U R D S V
U L J G U N K L R G B H J
S I G N A T U R E D W C X
H N J S K Y V C L E N C H
E J K C L K M N I H G O R
D T H R U S T J E K M N D
D C F I R E S X F Y T S L
R D C P K J N M E T H O D
T N A T S I S S A K M L M
R F G Y A W S K M J N E H

WORD SEARCH
(Created by Student D and Mom)

Find these words: equipment, invention, obvious, anxious, ignored, focus, constructing, clench, weary, sturdy

K H F T N E M P I U Q E N N
A N X I O U S K G D H B O O
H K M G F V W E A R Y K I I
C N K N H G D B S S S L T T
N M C O N S T R U C T I N G
E K M R K J G H C H U K E M
L H N E K M J H O Y R M V S
C G H D K J H F F N D J N T
O B V I O U S J T G Y H I J

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